PARTISAN!

Sad songs don't say enough.

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About Partisan:

Partisan is the official publication of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation (RCO). We are a monthly journal of the 'partyist left' in Australia, and an organ of independent, communist journalism.

Alongside the RCO, we fght for a reunifcation of the left into a party that can carry out the tasks of the communist and workers movement: the establishment of a democratic republic and the dissolution of the capitalist prison-states. ■

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Who is the "RCO"?

The Revolutionary Communist Organisation (RCO) is a pre-party formation that works towards the re-unifcation of the socialist left in Australia into a single, mass communist party. We come from diverse political backgrounds and schools of Marxist thought, yet we are united by a common program.

We welcome rigorous debate and disagreement and are open to factions, yet act as one organisation. We are guided by the principle of diversity of thought, and unity of action. The capitalist mode of production is at the root of every social, environmental, and economic crisis today.

We fght for the liberation of queer people, Indigenous people, and women, a liberation which can only be achieved through the destruction of the capitalist system. We are united by our determination to fght the capitalist mode of production at every turn, and our total commitment to its abolition. We are communists, unapologetically and without reservation.

We engage in every form of proletarian activity, whether protests or union drives, yet do not trail social movements; we aim in every instance to build the base for a mass workers' party, necessary to intervene in the class struggle and advance the communist movement. ■

PARTYISM: That section of the communist movement which sees the re-unifcation of communist forces into a single party representative of the movement as its primary task.

We do not reject the rest of the left - instead, we aim to work through the existing left to build a communist party. Such a party is united by a shared Marxist program, that is, a program for leading the working class to power and overthrowing the capitalist system.

For this reason, we eschew the malignant sect labels which are often thrown around amongst the left. We view all communist organisations are being "sects" - factional organisations which recruit to a particular tendency and viewpoint, as opposed to a Marxist program.

We aim to unite the sects into a party, being an organisation representative of the movement as a whole, and the political weapon of the working class. ■

The tide is high, but we're holding on!

Climate activism in Australia is fairly cyclical and on those grounds, predictable. Heightened awareness of how bad climate change is tends to come in the spring and summer months, when we experience the hottest summer on record (for the year). The great bushfres of 2019 were also a wake up call for much of the country. Scores of youth were pushed toward activism and radicalism after choking through bushfre smoke in high school - I sure was!

This November, Rising Tide will be hosting their yearly "People's Blockade", raising awareness about climate change and attempting to build numbers to wage a campaign of civil disobedience across the country. This puts climate change on the agenda for everybody at the end of the month, from mainstream bourgeois press to the socialist and activist left.

This issue of Partisan is slavishly devoted to the climate issue, and in particular, Rising Tide. It contains reprints of articles we wrote covering the 2024 blockade, as well as a two-part series on Rising Tide's politics, how it engages with the Left, and what a communist orientation toward Rising Tide should be. We also publish a great refection on Blockade Australia, a r-r-radical environmentalist group which burned bright and died quick. You can also fnd excerpts from the RCO's [draft] program relating to nature and the environment.

Breaking up the monotony of Rising Tide articles is an excellent report from Bangladesh on the status of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazaar. While most may have forgotten, the Rohingya genocide continues in earnest as Myanmar burns itself alive in a civil war. We are excited to publish reporting directly from Bangladesh, and eager to continue to do so. Partisan aims to expand its international reporting in the future.

The climate is a pressing issue, but the sectarian left is unclear on what the solution is. We are told a variety of schemes that could "fx" climate change: degrowing the economy, going vegan, abolishing coal mining, making everyone drive EVs, so on. But what is a genuinely communist and emancipatory "solution" to the climate crisis? The classic shibboleth is to say revolution. True, revolution would "solve" climate change. But putting the working class in power won't in itself curtail the worst excesses of extractivism. The working class very much has the capacity to run the eco-cidal death machine on its own, without the intervention of the managers or the ruling class.

The working class needs a radical program for radical change, in order to be capable of implementing the revolutionary changes necessary for "solving" climate change. In reality, climate change is happening, and can't be "solved", but through radical mass action, we can take the drastic steps necessary to curtail the worst impacts.

In spite of everything, this year we encourage militants to go to the Rising Tide blockade. Not to shake hands with the activist celebrities, or to get arrested on a kayak, but to engage with the environmental movement. Rising Tide will benefit from greater engagement with the working class, and a genuine engagement, not one on the basis of trying to win them over as a passive majority. Working people aren't stupid, and are broadly sympathetic to the environmentalist cause, but environmentalist activists have a habit of repelling workers (in fairness, so does most of the sectarian left). ■

Comradely,
Max J

I Love The World: Some Notes & Reflections After 8 Years of NSfN

Originally published in Notes South from Nowhere, ***Tyler West*** *reflected on the past Eight Years of his blog.*

> Patience is a virtue that you never seemed to learn
> You were born with nothing, to nothing you'll return
> – *New Model Army, "Lights Go Out", The Ghost of Cain (1985)*

I find myself in a peculiar mood these days with respect to Notes South from Nowhere. It occupies my mind a fair amount, and yet most of my creative and political efforts have been in other projects (something which has been the case for years at this point). When it was originally launched as The Ice Bloc, the blog was largely the product of a deep disillusionment with the extant socialist left. There were few if any avenues to write or record outside a vanishingly small number of sect papers, only one of which took submissions from outside the organisation. I wanted to write, I wanted to make my contribution to the political life of the socialist movement, and so establishing my own outlet for doing so seemed the only real option.

As I attempted to develop my intellectual engagement with socialism, the seemingly unshakable anti-intellectualism of New Zealand culture – that colonial pragmatism in which so many take unwarranted pride – felt as though they were closing walls around me. It is worth noting that I was very unwell at the time, and personal circumstance intermingled with political frustration to breed a cynical despair at the prospects for a broad socialist project. At the time it was difficult to disentangle my own circumstances from considered critiques of the political waters in which I felt to be drowning. Resultingly much of what I wrote in the early years, with a few exceptions, was not of great quality (even if some of the intentions I still think were well placed), and much of what I wrote is either now gone, rewritten and updated, or segmented off into other places.

The total number of outlets for such political engagements has only expanded a little, but the will to start new projects or collaborate across organisations seems to have developed healthily. My feeling when this blog was launched was that an overwhelming focus was placed on nonstop action, often with a massive toll on a limited number of committed activists for very little in the way of tangible results. The hostile and disinterested opposition to intellectual development on its own merits ("everything must be for the movement, comrades! these books will keep you off the streets!") has dissipated with time. This is not to say that New Zealand is now a hub for radical intellectual insight at the grassroots level, but the avenues for engaging if one wishes to with the intellectual heritage of socialism are less clogged than they once were.

Where once a new reading group would have been accepted only with a certain snark, a snide comment about being too good for protest politics or disconnection from "the people" (who always seemed to be framed as borderline illiterate and hostile to big ideas), it seems to me now that such a development would be welcomed on its own terms for what it is – a genuine attempt to contribute through intellectual development to the wider political development of socialism in New Zealand. This is something I am incredibly pleased to see, and it has significantly altered how I view the socialist left in this country, as well as how I conceptualise my own contributions and place in it.

The political landscape of the socialist left has changed considerably, with only one of the major organisations (the International Socialists) which dominated that scene when I was in high school still around in any notable number. Instead, most organisations (with a few exceptions) have emerged in the context of, or contemporary to, the two major organisations of the last decade: Organise

In Loving Memory of Tyler West

The author of the Notes South from Nowhere blog, Tyler West, passed away suddenly last week. A communist, a historian, and a faithful archivist of our movement, we share his reflections on his project. Comrade Tyler reflected the best qualities of a communist intellectual - willingness to educate, a deep love of the working class, a commitment to mass politics, and a depth of knowledge that few his age could rival. He is mourned by all of us. We will clear the trail that he blazed. ■

With Love,
Partisan Staff

Aotearoa and the Federation of Socialist Societies. These two organisations, the former to my knowledge now existing as a rump primarily in Auckland and the latter the dominant force on the socialist left, are the only ones of their kind in New Zealand to have consistently breached 100+ formal paying members this century. The Federation of Socialist Societies now maintain somewhere a bit below 200 members, while Organise Aotearoa peaked (again to my knowledge) at somewhere around or a little below 300 members in the late-2010s.

Crucially for this discussion, both organisations have been encouraging of members expanding their intellectual capacity for political engagement (albeit in very different ways and directions). While I cannot speak to experience within Organise Aotearoa, I was never a member, it seemed from the outside that its multi-tendency nature while remaining an explicitly socialist project had a pronounced impact of the wider socialist left. It did something no organisation had done for decades – it became a pole of attraction and organisation for what was once termed "the independent left", those with socialist inclinations who were active within the wider progressive movements but had little interest in the established socialist organisations. The path forward to organise the broader fractured mass of socialist sympathisers, not a large demographic but one significantly larger than the membership of any one organisation, seemed to be starting to clarify.

While Organise Aotearoa did not prove to be the central tentpole of a mass renewal in "Kiwi socialism", it seemed to shatter an ossification which had set in among the socialist left. In certain respects, the Federation of Socialist Societies (to which I should mention, I am a member of my local constituent society) has stepped into the gap left by Organise Aotearoa – at least in terms of size and momentum. What seems clear to me, however, is that a precedent for organisation on a fundamentally larger scale than had seemingly been possible in the 1990s through mid-2010s has now been set. So, as my health has improved, my central frustration with the socialist left diminished, and a political 'earthquake in a teacup' took place on the socialist left, my perspectives and activity have likewise shifted.

Notes South from Nowhere has transitioned from a central repository for my writing and recording, with everything I do being originally published here or republished here from elsewhere, to more of a central hub to link through to an array of publications and projects which now stretch across the country. I take down more material than I put up, with only a few original pieces living on the blog itself and most of my writing being for other outlets. Much of what I publish or run through my own outlets is now done through other places and are simply connected by this blog. In short, as the situation has changed, Notes South from Nowhere has ceased to really be an outlet. Less of what I write is here, none of my recordings are hosted here, the archival material is hosted elsewhere and promoted here, and republication is reserved for individual segments from larger items (such as an individual article rather than an entire magazine).

So, that peculiar mood regarding this blog is – has it served its purpose? The blog has had a faithful if not particularly big readership since the start, and that readership has followed along through periods of inactivity and multiple migrations across the internet as major and minor social media websites have undertaken a process of utility decline. The website will go on, but it will largely serve to redirect readers to the appropriate place for a variety of projects, outlets, and organisations. More things will go on the blog itself, especially as I have begun my PhD, but less of it will be the kinds of articles and reviews that long-time readers originally came for. That original material which is posted here (such as the recent article on students) will only be that which I feel is not fit for the other publications I write for, or will otherwise be more fragmentary in nature and as such better suited to blog posts than formal publications.

> You got a lot to give, don't throw it away
> You'll have your way some day, it will come to you
> ...
> So quit thinking (Now's the time)
> And start doing (Now's the time)
> Now's the time, now's the time to live
> – *Descendents, "Ace", I Don't Wanna Grow Up (1985)*

That mood, however, has extended to a broader reflection on the socialist left and why, through all of it, I stuck to this movement at every turn. While my politics have shifted from a loose teenage anarchism towards a kind of eclectic socialist republicanism, it never left the waters of socialism. It has led me to look back at some of the contributions I have made, and to wonder what future contributions will look like. As much as anything else, it has been my

reengagement with the local artistic and intellectual scene that has pushed me towards such refection as much as anything else. I have a habit of isolation, an unfortunate side efect of my health conditions, and recently I've made a solid commitment to get back to such events.

Wandering home from a gig recently, I found myself thinking about the interaction of my love for local art and music, and my membership in an organisation which places a strong appreciation on (among many others) the works of William Morris. Certainly, I doubt that the music I gladly volunteer to get battered watching was likely to be what Morris had in mind when putting into practice his commitment to a world of beautiful and worthwhile things. But in nursing sore feet and a few new bruises, I couldn't help but think the spirit of the event was very much exactly that kind of useful and beautiful thing in which we might imbue our fruitful labour. To be sure, such fruitful labour will also look like many things more or less immediately "productive" in terms of the reproduction of life. I think of the workshop in which a heritage society I am a member of repair and maintain old fre engines, or the home mechanical work friends do in restoring old cars or maintaining bikes to give away. Both are, in a manner, immediate necessities in the reproduction of life. Both are sapped from our daily lives by a mode of production in which every single aspect of life, including its reproduction, must be subject to the barbaric whims of market law and its drive toward the dismantling of social bonds toward such an end.

It is in moments of rapture, being tossed about by a roiling crowd, that I have a rea f rmation of my politics unlike that which anything else could induce. This is why I must do this. This moment of fulflling connection which refuses the alienation of person to person. In the mass, I de-individualise for a moment, and in the aftermath of that moment I am refreshed with the feeling of being fully human. For a second, I would die without question for each and every person in the crowd. Of course, I return to straightforward thought by the time the song is over and the crowd calms down, but the impact lingers. It is for a chance to experience on a routine basis a life for which the impersonal alienation of market logic is abolished, and in which the reproduction of life is organised such that focus might be placed on the development of beautiful and worthwhile things, to which I make what contributions that I can.

However, if I am experiencing a renewal of determination now, what kept me around through long years of cynicism before? I start to wonder if, in part, there was an unacknowledged sense that things could be diferent. That there was, in spite of bitter disagreements and stinging defeats, a latent potential for a revival. And, if that potential is real, that it might be something I could contribute in some small way to, that I might experience. Perhaps part of what kept me around was a certain degree of faith mixed in with a desire to see that fulflling world of beautiful things with my own eyes. That, and a theoretical and historical inspiration which only grew the more I engaged, may have swirled all together to keep me tracking through times where I questioned why I was still doing it all. Now, with the benefit of a healthier, more experienced, and more widely read vantage point, it seems that there is not only the room but the reason to engage, intervene, cooperate, and start doing.

> And now I fnd that I'm doing
> All those things you would have done
> ...
> So do I thank you? Do I curse you?
> These tracks stretch out before me – the ones you left behind
>
> – *New Model Army, "Inheritance", Thunder and Consolation (1989)*

To return briefy to matters revolving around Notes South from Nowhere, I want to mark the passing of the Nowhere Ephemera Archive which was for most of its life the Radical Aotearoa Digital Archive (or the RADAR Project). The archive remains, but it is now entirely merged into the blog. For the most part, this is purely a technical matter of convenience. However, as the RADAR Project website had a much larger readership than the blog ever has, it is worth making note that the underlying project has gone nowhere. Given the hosting itself was always over at the Internet Archive, as is the case with a few other collections of Aotearoa's left-wing periodicals, the actual access to those documents is literally unchanged.

I largely bring up the archive in order to note that, given the PhD, I'll be digitising material for research reasons again and hopefully in larger numbers than before. My email will also remain very much open to anyone who might have material which fts with the archive, digital or physical. Likewise, I remain as open as ever to collaborations on archival and historical matters regarding the left in Aotearoa. If a reader wants to get

involved or has an idea on that particular front, do contact!

There is something to be said, in this reflective mood, about ensuring that this historical focus is not backwards looking. Odd as this may sound, the point in my mind of making sure this material is preserved and promulgated is not just out of some fidelity to days gone by, nor is it simply to mine for lessons to inform present activity. To me, this has to be part of an ongoing project of establishing intellectual and practical infrastructure for the development of both the socialist left and New Zealand studies as a field. It serves a joint and mutually reinforcing purpose, even if these are largely or entirely separate projects.

There's something of a complex tightrope to walk when engaging in the archival and historical legacy of socialism, a need to neither naval gaze about the past nor treat it only as an auxiliary to the present. It must be integrated both as historical reality and as a factor in the present when making a material assessment of current conditions. This is all to say, it must be assessed both on its own terms and in the broader context in which it resides to truly be intellectually illuminating. This archival material should be preserved and promulgated, yes, but it must be critically studied as well. Simply making it available and saying "here it is, preserved so that it may not disappear" is insufficient if it acts as mere curiosity. It must have a role to play.

> I been excited, ain't nobody read
> They don't know what to get ready for
> Let's get ready and stop the war
> – *Grand Funk Railroad, "People Let's Stop The War", E Pluribus Funk (1971)*

A last thought before I finish of is the question of political infrastructure, a concept I've been mulling over and have begun to elaborate in recent and upcoming articles. Generally speaking, political infrastructure is an attempt to conceptualise a materialist assessment of political organisation, inspired in part by Social Movement Theory among other fields of study. The reason I think it worth bringing up here is that it, with some other things I've published about recently, is something that I can see being an increasingly important part of my thinking as well as a way stone in how I not only contribute to the socialist movement but conceptualise it as well.

In a way, this is my own attempt at allowing experience to inform theory to inform practice. I have long yelled into the void about the political fragmentation of the socialist left in Aotearoa, not only organisationally but in activity. Every group pulling in its own direction in ignorance not only of other groups but also our own broader history. There is, or has been, a great dearth of coordination which has continually hobbled the collective capacity of the socialist left to act. Each group, tendency, sect, or network either conceptualises itself as the sole and only constituent body in which the politics of socialism could be expressed or as merely one in a dizzying constellation of bodies heading in countless directions.

I won't try to say the Federation of Socialist Societies has not become a major pole of political attraction within the socialist left in recent years, but it is not the only extant pole of attraction that exists and nor is it (or is it trying) to be some final central organ for the socialist project in this country. I believe that, in understanding the various projects of the socialist left instead as political infrastructure which each have a nominal function and an actual function (to crib from Stafford Beer, the point of a political organisation is what it does), the potential to cooperate and from there coordinate activity is revealed.

If an organisation or project is understood as a body which is fit to serve (nominally or actually) a particular function, then its interrelation with other projects which serve functions in the wider interest and context of socialism as a political movement can have a great deal of friction alleviated. Put simply, many of the organisations of the socialist left are, in theory, conceptualised as the first step towards the creation of the chief organ of socialist activity. Yet, many such chief organs supposedly exist, and at least until quite recently have done so in deliberate isolation from the other supposed chief organs. Without coordination, or a conception of the organisation as infrastructure which is intended to serve particular political purposes, an organisation may labour on, fruitlessly, for decades.

To put these thoughts in short terms, any extant socialist organisation today should try to conceive of itself as part of the infrastructure of the socialist movement and to attempt to work out what its nominal role and actual role in that movement is. Without taking steps towards figuring these basics out, we're going to remain paddling a single boat in different directions. To quote from the old British socialist band The Redskins: "let's make it work!"■

What was Blockade Australia?

With activists under police surveillance, and actions dying out, Blockade Australia has been defeated by the Australian state. ***Miss Chaf*** *writes on Blockade Australia's origins, politics, and contrasts it with the revolutionary politics of communism.*

Blockade Australia activist Sam (21). Photo: Blockade Australia FB.

What was Blockade Australia's political purpose?

Blockade Australia (BA) began as an eco-anarchist project developed in opposition to the perceived tactical ine f ciency of Extinction Rebellion (XR) and Front Line Action on Coal (FLAC). BA considered "maximum disruption, minimum arrests" to be the way forward for the climate protest movement. They favoured blockading "economic bottlenecks" (ports) primarily in Newcastle, but also Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. They describe these tactics in their purpose statement:

"Blockade Australia coordinates mobilisations at economic bottlenecks and centres of political power [...] By utilising direct action in this way, Blockade Australia builds grassroots power focused on opposing the colonial and extractive systems of Australia as a whole."

BA saw the XR strand of non-violent "post political" activism as counterposed to its own, but both actually developed in tandem. There were eco-anarchists in XR from the very beginning, and BA had a cross pollination with XR activists and politics. Underpinning these two movements was the same fundamental assumption of the separation between man and nature, or "society" and "the planet". The virtue of resistance, and the necessity for non-violent "rebellion" were central to both XR and BA. This rebellion posed as a societal responsibility. "We are the planet defending itself". From society, of course.

Because of this responsibility, the politics of these activist spaces revolve around the idea of the "activist" protesting "society". The activist is a moral agent of change, while society has become a regressive and destructive collectivity. In a sense it is the complete opposite of a Marxist conception of politics; where classes must struggle through society to push forward social changes. BA understood itself in opposition not only to "society" but to the rest of the environmentalist movement. The organisers saw the movement as selling out (they were right about this). They were critical of the control non-government organisations (NGOs) had over the Stop Adani campaign and of the creation of green celebrities like Bob Brown. BA wanted to be infamous rather than famous, and this helped them recruit from a pool of anxious young people who felt unheard in the wider movement.

Their opposition to the more conservative, pro-capitalist, liberal environmentalist movement de fned their politics. "Anti-capitalist" slogans were more common in BA's parlance than any positive political prescriptions. Being clear about what you believe in or allow is better than avoiding the discussion in the hope it will mobilise more people. Ecological communism, in contrast, has a positive vision of reorganising human society in a sustainable way.

Direct Action and Activism: A tactic with no strategy

BA mobilisations were organisationally impressive, with small a f nity groups of activists sustaining blockades over periods as long as two weeks, day after day. In the end, no one who participated in BA was kept in jail for more than a week due. Some were held on remand, but they were able to appeal the harsher sentences they received. Fairly robust civil rights lawyers, networks and NGOs protected BA's legality, as did solidarity from other groups.

They were never designated as terrorists, in comparison to groups like Palestine Action in the UK today or the Earth Liberation Front in the 1990s. Sometimes BA were treated like a criminal gang, but with most of their activities as individuals being legal and pro-social (charity, social work, nursing etc.), it was hard for the media or the courts to separate BA

participants from society, however 'naive' or 'juvenile' some systems of power found them. Police know that climate activists are non-violent, and use them as safe training exercises to test their police boats and crowd control.

BA's early announcement that they would shut down Sydney in June 2022, with a mass open mobilisation, led to them being surveilled and raided at Colo prior to their announced mobilisation date. Blockade devices were confscated and activists arrested. Their attempt at blockading the Sydney CBD was a fraction of what was planned, and bail conditions split the organising across three states. BA never recovered from Sydney. The 2023 BA mobilisations were concurrent in three states, making minimal impact compared to 2021.

There was hope that interest in BA might have benefted from covering more geographic ground, but one of BA's leading organisers died in late 2023. This event was deeply traumatic for many and it signaled the end of BA's long-term viability; people began to realise they just couldn't do this forever. Despite this, in 2024 BA broke their record for the longest mobilisation they could achieve at the Newcastle coal port, doing daily and twice-daily actions for two weeks. This felt like a last hurrah, and it's unclear if they will ever reach that apogee again.

The issue with Blockade Australia was one of strategy. Propaganda of the deed underpinned the entire project; an anarchist theory that "heroic acts" of resistance (in the early 20th century, this consisted of assassinating politicians and dukes) would galvanise uprisings or similar acts. BA called it a "culture of resistance". The theory went that BA could show the world, but more specifcally the eco-activist scene in Australia, that "ofensive" actions were possible and efective. These ofensive actions were possible but whether they were efective depends on what the goals were.

"Blockade Australia is a coordinated response that aims to develop a culture of efective resistance through strategic direct action." - Purpose statement

The theory underpinning the Blockade Australia mobilisations was created without the contribution of the majority of its present participants. This ideology could not be easily reformed, as Blockade Australia was not an organisation, had no of cial membership, and no structure for the political contestation of its program and politics.

The dedicated organisers who maintained the administrative and socially necessary structures to continue this mobilisation had no impetus to reform or revolutionise the politics that have taken root. If people thought something could be done better, they could make their own group.

The politics were buttressed by the assumption that the original founders of the BA strategy were theoretically correct in their assessment of "disruptive actions". BA as a style of direct action never had a structure for political adjudication. All challenges to the centralised organising force were necessarily ad hoc, and relied on the goodwill of veteran organisers in BA itself. The blockades eventually just became an end in themselves, with no long term justifcation other than: "this is just what we do".

Where is Blockade Australia now?

Blockade Australia, as a political mobilisation, degenerated into a sect, just as detached from the world as any sect can become. This sectarianism developed mostly because of the nature of labour distribution in the organisation and the immense time commitments required to truly contribute to the project. The managers of Blockade Australia needed to be "full time" activists who consistently worked, lived and ate together and discussed the viability and possibilities of future blockades. This meant that anyone who had formerly been closely involved either stepped back entirely or was relegated to a position of damage control, attempting to make sure no one was badly injured.

Blockade Australia, and all future anarchist attempts at "igniting" a resistance movement through blockades, street riots and clashes with the police will inevitably come up against the reality that unless they have large sections (hundreds of thousands of people) of the working class on their side, they will be obliterated by the armed forces of the state.

No amount of non-violent direct action, or moral clarity will protect minute civil disobedient or insurrectionist groups from being isolated, repressed and eventually extinguished by the colossal weapons the capitalist state has at its disposal. The movement that can resolve this problem is inherently majoritarian, and will have to be built over decades, not months. It will inevitably include massive sections of working class society, and this will mean it cannot cater to only one social niche or clique. Climate justice requires an internationally coordinated economy managed by the working class. There is no easy trick that can save us; workers are all in this together. ■

Understanding Rising Tide & The Momentum Model

Rising Tide exploded back onto the activist scene in 2022 after a decade of absence. Since then, it has hosted increasingly larger "blockades" of the coal port in Newcastle, NSW. ***Max J*** *writes about the history of Rising Tide, its politics, and the momentum model of activist organising it adheres to.*

Rising Tide is one of the largest environmentalist activist groups in Australia, in particular of the civil disobedience, direct action variety. Since their relaunch in 2022, they have hosted the People's Blockade, which has grown in size each year. They are based in Newcastle, a city which hosts the largest coal port in Australia. Their interactions with the organised socialist left are few and far between: beyond hand-shakes with Socialist Alliance and more recently The Socialist Party, politically, Rising Tide is much closer to the Greens and the Animal Justice Party.

Rising Tide's history (2005-today)

Rising Tide has its origins in the early 2000s. It was one of three "Rising Tide" groups that were independently formed, along Rising Tide US and Rising Tide UK, though they are not part of an international grouping. Information about Rising Tide's first iteration, from the early 2000s to the 2010s, is hard to come by. A 2009 issue of Opus Magazine (University of Newcastle's student publication) contains a photograph of an alleged People's Blockade that took place on March 21st (2009).

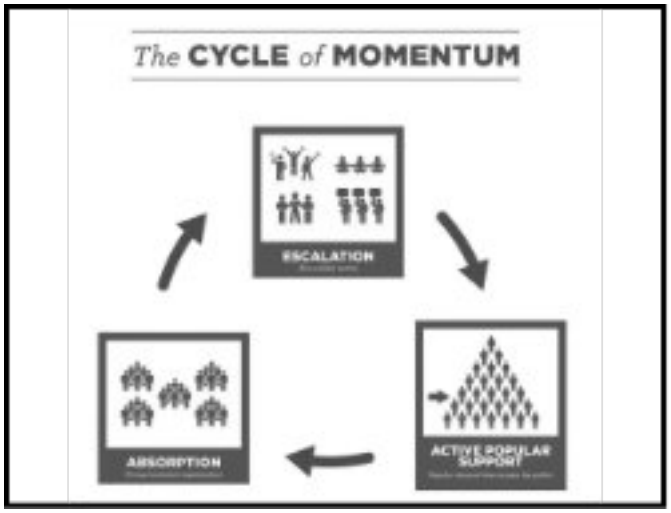
Rising Tide demobilised in 2012, for a variety of reasons. One of the main reasons seems to be the power-sharing deal made between the Greens and Gillard's Labor government, during which many environmentalist activist groups demobilised. Labor abandoned climate action and soon abandoned its agreement with the Greens. Officially, Rising Tide states that they "were active in Newcastle from 2005 to 2012, when our members became involved in climate research and other climate campaigns."

Rising Tide blockade in April, 2012. Photo: Rising Tide FB.

Rising Tide Blockade training, October 27th 2025. Photo: Rising Tide FB.

Eventually, climate change would become a hot button topic again. In August of 2018, Swedish high school student Greta Thunberg would hold the first of many 'school strikes', which would spread internationally as School Strike for Climate/Fridays for Future. In Australia, School Strike for Climate (SS4C) would host large school strikes that brought in scores of high school students and adult supporters. This rejuvenation in climate activism was spurred on primarily by the 2018 election of Scott Morrison (LNP), and his tenure would oversee numerous climate disasters, the most notable of which was the 2019 bushfires (during which he infamously took a family holiday to Honolulu).

Rising Tide would soon regroup in 2022, and form as the current iteration we see today. It would host its first Blockade in a decade in 2023, and host another in 2024. As of writing, it plans on hosting a third this year. Rising Tide is registered as a charity, which is not out of the ordinary for groups of its type. Since it is a registered charity, it visible on the charity register through the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (ACNC) website.



Momentum model's "cycle of momentum". Image: Momentum Community.

The Momentum model

Rising Tide's politics are vague to outsiders. This is as much a consequence of the 'swamp' of environmental activism as it is a product of Rising Tide itself. There are a few things that need to be cleared up from the start. Rising Tide does not present itself as a revolutionary, or anti-capitalist, grouping. This is a misconception that many on the left have: that environmentalists trend toward anti-capitalism or socialism. This is especially not the case for Rising Tide. While Rising Tide and environmentalists make appeals to 'workers', they view their central subject as being a classless 'public', often 'the people' (hence, the people's blockade).

Rising Tide organises primarily along the momentum model. This is a model of civil resistance organising which takes a broad view of the social movements of the past and attempts to synthesise a model for future organising. It is a hybrid model aiming at merging 'structure-based organising', described as "organising that tends to target a decision-maker with an instrumental demand", and 'mass protest', described as "disruptive action that publicly expresses outrage and urgency around a given issue". It is a model which does not aim to win over a broad layer of society, but instead it believes that "a movement wins when it has the support of a sustained active minority and a passive majority of the public."

Similarly organised environmentalist groups, such as the Tomorrow Movement (est. 2019), also follow the momentum model. Adherents of the momentum model believe that there are four components to a movement's "DNA":

1. Story, which is the public facing identity and dominant narrative(s) of the movement.
2. Strategy, the aims and goals of the movement.
3. Culture, an internal system of values, principles and practices.
4. Structure, how the movement is organised materially.

The momentum theory of change is one of healing people's connection to themselves, their communities, and the planet. It believes in restoring "wholeness, reciprocity, and community". The momentum model takes an "ecological" view of social movements. That is, that there are a diversity of roles in social movements, and a diversity of groupings, which all inter-relate and support each other in different ways. Deepa Iyer of the Building Movement Project describes the following roles within a "social change ecosystem map":

- Weavers, who understand and analyse the connectivity between people, places, organisations, ideas, and movements.
- Experimenters, activists who pioneer, innovate and invent.
- Frontline Responders, those who support the community through marshalling and organising resources for community care.
- Visionaries, who imagine and generate ideas for communities and movements.
- Builders, those who develop, organise and implement ideas and practices, etc.
- Caregivers, who nurture and nourish activists and community members.
- Disruptors, who take risky actions to shake the status quo.
- Healers, who tend to traumas caused by oppressive structures and practices.
- Storytellers, who craft and share community stories, experiences, etc.
- Guides, who teach, counsel and give advice.

Social change efforts as part of the ecosystem belief are grouped into three broad categories:

1. Personal transformation (yoga, therapy, education)
2. Alternative institutions (co-operatives, time banks, ashrams)
3. Dominant institutional change (advocacy, community and labour organising, mass protest).

Understanding Rising Tide

Once you understand the momentum model, you will broadly understand the general way that Rising Tide organises itself and views the world, as well as its theory of change. We can broadly understand its "DNA" per the momentum model in the following way:

1. Story: Rising Tide publicly identifes itself as a civil disobedience activist organisation, aiming at doing grassroots organising to win its main demands.
2. Strategy: It has three core demands, and a two-part plan in winning them (having them institutionalised)
3. Culture: It has a set of guiding principles and values.
4. Structure: It is a "grassroots" organisation which is organised along a f nity groups and local activist hubs.

Rising Tide has three core demands made of state and federal governments:

1. Immediately cancel all new fossil fuel projects.
2. Tax fossil fuel export profts at 75% to fund community and industrial transition, and pay for climate loss and damage.
3. End all coal exports from Newcastle, the world's largest coal port, by 2030.

They have a two step plan which involves a climate defence pledge, a build-up phase, and a civil resistance phase. Their climate defence pledge is a pledge to commit toward actively engaging in Rising Tide's civil resistance movement to defend the climate. It reads as such: "I pledge to be one of 10,000+ participants in the Rising Tide climate defence movement by engaging in sustained, nonviolent civil resistance - or supporting others who do so. I commit to help end Australia's biggest contribution to the climate crisis and stop the export of coal via Newcastle, the world's largest coal port." (Rising Tide Handbook, pg. 19).

The "build up phase", which had been undertaken from 2023 to 2024, was the phase in which Rising Tide focused on building relationships with other activists and groups, training its own activists, and building the numbers necessary to carry out its plan of stopping coal ships, primarily through building momentum (via the climate camp and blockade).

The "civil resistance phase", which Rising Tide is building toward, is the phase in which the organisation will commence wide scale actions to disrupt the coal industry across Australia. They claim to require "ten thousand or more active participants" for this phase. Rising Tide claims to be rapidly growing, "doubling their numbers every month" since at least November 2022. It is di f cult to con f rm this, as Rising Tide is not a membership organisation. That is, the only mark of being "in" Rising Tide is actively showing up.

Rising Tide's activists (it is di f cult to describe them as "members") are organised into formal activist hubs, which are city and regional based pseudo branches. For example, Rising Tide is comprised of the following "hubs": Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Northern Rivers, Sydney, Newcastle, and Melbourne. These hubs are autonomous and make decisions via consensus (which is common for environmentalist activist groups). Isabella Todd's case study of Rising Tide (from 2022-2024) describes "growing pains" in the organisational model of the group, culminating in proposals for a "national steering team".

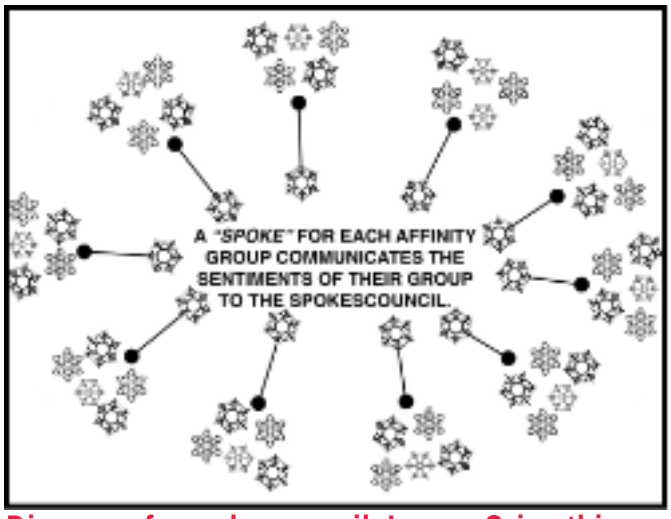


Diagram of a spokescouncil. Image: Crimethinc.

Rising Tide's 2024 handbook describes their structure and decision-making. Activists are organised into local hubs (as described above), who elect representatives who in turn attend national level meetings. They, via consensus, decide the direction of the organisation, amongst other things. They describe their national steering team as "consisting of seven of our most active and experienced members who meet once or twice per week to discuss issues and formulate proposals for consideration at the hubs meetings. Rising Tide does not list who is on their "national steering team".

Their handbook describes "a f nity groups and spokescouncils", which are prominent in these kinds of activist spaces. A f nity groups are also popular with anarchist groupings. They are described as "small groups of people

(usually between 5-15) who know each other well, and work together towards a common goal". Crimethinc describes a f nity groups as "a circle of friends who understand themselves as an autonomous political force." It is best to describe a f nity groups as friendship circles or groups of associates who come together to carry out a political aim during a protest or other action.

A "spokescouncil" is formed as a f nity groups come together to make bigger decisions at protests and actions. Each a f nity group appoints a representative who sits in a central circle, which their respective groups sit behind them. It is another form of consensus decision making. Participedia describes spokescouncils as having been used "by Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Portland, Occupy Vancouver, as well as the Zapatistas, the Women's Movement, the Anti-Nuclear Movement, and the Global Justice Movement." Spokescouncils were allegedly convened at various points during the 2023 and 2024 blockades, and will no doubt appear again this year.

Rising Tide also has caucuses, which are internal groupings based mainly around identity or shared oppressions/issues. Most prominent of these is Queer Rising, an LGBTQIA+ caucus within Rising Tide based in Newcastle. Youth Rising is another caucus within Rising Tide, made up of under 18s. Youth Rising is the result of Newcastle SS4C merging with Rising Tide in June/July 2024.

Rising Tide's politics are populist in nature. That is, they make appeals to "the people" and "the ninety-nine percent". They are notable for being a cross-generational movement, being made up of people of all ages, from under 18 to over 50. They are also a diverse movement, insofar as there are many women activists involved in Rising Tide, as well as non-white ones. There is subsequently a diverse range of opinions within Rising Tide. This diversity of thought is a bene f t and a drawback. It is a drawback primarily because it means that anyone wearing a Rising Tide shirt is more or less a "Rising Tide activist". This includes a minority within the environmentalist movement who hold anti-social views that border on genocidal. For example, Scientist Rebellion (part of Extinction Rebellion) has activists who endorse the views of The Population Bomb, which posits that population booms will lead to famine and mass death. Their solution? Mass sterilisation in the third world. This genocidal worldview is a minority in Rising Tide, but their loose structures make it di f cult to exclude these people, who were once a signi fcant portion of the environmentalist movement in past decades.

With a general understanding of the momentum model, it is possible to understand Rising Tide, and develop a strategy for engaging with them. ■

Defend transgender workers!

LGBTQ+ workers have long been excised and marginalised from parts of the workers movement, which has led to the misconception that workers rights are separate to queer rights, trans rights, etc. In fact, trans rights are not only connected to workers rights, they are workers rights. When bosses and governments attack trans rights inside and outside of the workplace, it is a concealed attack against the rights of all workers.

When the government attacks access to trans healthcare, they are also attacking access to healthcare for everybody, when we desperately need an accessible, universal healthcare system. When bosses attack transition leave for trans workers, it opens the door for bosses to attack and restrict other forms of leave for all workers (such as sick leave and parental leave).

When bosses implement discriminatory policy against trans workers (in, for example, hiring), it allows them to discriminate against all workers. When the government attacks trans people and their ability to exist in public and political life, they also attack the ability of non-trans people to do so as well. It is an attack against all workers concealed as an attack against trans people only.

Fighting for workers rights means fghting for trans rights, because abandoning trans workers only means that it becomes more acceptable to abandon other kinds of workers, and because trans people are part of the working class as well. Trans activists must connect their struggle with the workers movement in the fght for their collective liberation. Trans rights can be fought for and defended by a united, mass workers movement.

Trans liberation is only possible when the trans rights movement unites with the workers movement in a single, combined struggle against oppression. Workers must unite and fght for trans rights, and the emancipation of all humanity - this is how we build a society that has overcome oppression.■

Newcastle Communists (RCO)

Struggle story & Report on Ethnic Cleansing and Persecution of the Rohingya in Rakhine State During 2024–2025: A Personal Testimony by a Rohingya

*Independent socialist and Rohinya youth activist **Noor Sadaque** reports on ethnic cleansing and persecution of Rohingya peoples in Rakhine State, Myanmar.*

The Rohingya crisis is one of the gravest humanitarian tragedies of the 21st century. This report, titled '*Struggle Story & Report on Ethnic Cleansing and Persecution of the Rohingya in Rakhine State During 2024–2025*', provides a frsthand account from a survivor of ethnic persecution in Rakhine State, Myanmar. It documents the unbearable suffering faced by the Rohingya community at the hands of the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military.

Through this testimony, we witness not only the brutality inficted upon a stateless people but also the geopolitical and economic structures that continue to enable such violence. It is essential for international community to understand who the key actors are, the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw), the Arakan Army (AA), and their political wing, the United League of Arakan (ULA) , and how the interplay between ethnic nationalism, resource exploitation, and militarism has driven the genocide against the Rohingya. Understanding these connections helps us situate the Rohingya genocide within the broader global context of imperialism, capitalism, and ethnic domination.

Interview with Rohingya victims at the Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh. Photo: Noor Sadaque.

Bosher Ullah's Testimony

My name is Bosher Ullah. I was chairman in our village, I am from Naimma Hali, a village in Buthidaung, located in Arakan State. In 2025, my family and I left Arakan to seek safety in the refugee camps of Bangladesh. The journey from Arakan to the camp in Bangladesh was extremely difcult. We walked all the way from Naran Seik in Arakan to the Bangladesh border. It took us around 18 days on foot. We crossed the border into Bangladesh through brokers, who charged us 1.3 million Burmese kyats (A$950) per person. From our home in Naimma Hali to the crossing point, the path was full of hardship. We had to pass through mountainous terrain. When our food ran out, we were forced to survive by eating banana plants. On the way, many children, elderly people, and pregnant women died due to the harsh conditions. In some areas, there were landmines, and people lost their lives after stepping on them. When we arrived in Bangladesh, we were confused and did not know where to go. Then, another group of brokers brought us to the Rohingya camp in Bangladesh, charging 18,000 Bangladeshi taka (A$225) per person. Many of us were also robbed by the brokers, both in Myanmar and in Bangladesh. They stole all the money and jewelry from people along the way. This is how, in 2025, we fed from Arakan in groups and arrived in Bangladesh. I now live with my family in Balukhali 8W camp.

When we arrived at the camp, we saw that there was hardly any space left to stay. Some people from our group, whose relatives had

Photo: Noor Sadaque.

already arrived at the camp, found shelter in their relatives' places. As for those of us who had no one, we managed to build small shelters using tarpaulins and bamboo fences in abandoned areas. Some even set up shelters in the ravines of the hills, but these places were very risky. Just a little rain or storm, and our homes would be submerged in water up to our knees. Although we started to build our shelters in these abandoned and risky areas, we could not get permission from the camp authorities to build them due to the situation. We are still in a state of uncertainty, as we don't know when we might be evicted from these places.

If I talk about Maungdaw and Buthidaung, I must say that from March 13, 2024, the military started severe control in these areas, and they imposed curfews. During the curfew, people in these areas struggled to gather essential goods. At that time, the price of one kilogram of onions went up to 160,000 Kyat. Rice was 90,000 Kyat, and the price of chili was 120,000 Kyat, everything was extremely expensive. Many people died due to the lack of medical services, and many children died due to the lack of treatment. I personally saw two pregnant women who were told by doctors to go to the hospital for delivery but could not make it. Later, both died during delivery. As time passed, these problems only worsened.

Amidst this struggle for survival, Ramadan came. On the 20th day of Ramadan, the Arakan Army attacked Maungdaw and Buthidaung. They seized two military cantonments in the northern part of Maungdaw. Afterward, the Arakan Army launched an attack on Puimali, located next to Maungdaw. The Arakan Army, as outsiders, entered the Muslim neighborhood and fought against the military. During the attack, a large bomb dropped by the military exploded in the Muslim neighborhood of Puimali. As a result, 18 Rohingyas were killed, and 28 others were seriously injured.

The next day, the residents of Puimali, carrying the injured, fled to another area to save their lives. Many of the injured people died during the escape, and many children and women died from exhaustion. Later, when those who had been shot were admitted to hospitals in a safe area, it was revealed that the

In 2021, the Tatmadaw (the armed forces) overthrew the elected National League for Democracy. This coup caused turmoil across Myanmar, and started a civil war which rages to this day. As of writing, over eighty thousand have died, while millions more scrape by as refugees, internally displaced or otherwise.

Rakhine State, also known as Arakan, is located on Myanmar's west coast. Bangladesh sits to its north-west border. Ethnic Rakhine make up the majority of Rakhine state's population, alongside a substantial minority of Rohingya muslims.

The Arakan Army was formed in the late 2000s, and fought alongside other separatist and nationalist militias in the 2010s. It was initially based in Kachin state, in north Myanmar. Currently, their forces are concentrated in Rakhine state.

Both the Arakan Army and the Tatmadaw have repressed the Rohingya peoples living in Rakhine state and beyond. Rohingya refugees feeing the conflict, often into Bangladesh, must travel long distances through Arakan Army occupied territory. Many of these refugees end up in the Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazaar, in southern Bangladesh. ■

Arakan Army soldiers at the Gwa township in southern Rakhine state, Myanmar, 2024.

bullets found in their bodies were from the Arakan Army. This news spread widely among the people at that time. What I've described here is the situation in Maungdaw and Buthidaung in 2024.

Then, on March 17, 2024, the Arakan Army took control of Buthidaung city and all its surrounding areas. Before this, up until March 15, there were armed groups of military forces and Rohingya youth positioned in Buthidaung city, and they had occasionally fred small arms against the Arakan Army. However, on March 15, suddenly the military and all other armed

Arakan Army soldiers pose after taking Buthidaung township in north Rakhine state, near the Bangladesh border.

forces vanished from Buthidaung. Then, on the 17th, the Arakan Army entered Buthidaung city and began indiscriminately bombing the area. They continued to drop bombs using drones. The places where these bombs fell and the surrounding areas were completely burned to the ground. In this situation, when the people of Buthidaung city were running for their lives, many lost their children, and many elderly people and children, unable to leave their homes, were burned alive. Most of the houses in the city were completely destroyed by the fre. More than 100 Rohingyas lost their lives in this attack. At that time, the only people remaining in Buthidaung were ordinary civilians. There were no armed forces in Buthidaung at that time. I don't know whom the Arakan Army was targeting in this attack. The Arakan Army claimed that they carried out this brutal attack to stabilize Buthidaung.

Then, after the bombing stopped, the entire population of Buthidaung began walking together towards a safer area. But at one point, the Arakan Army stopped them. They then separated 40 people from the group, called them aside, and issued an order that they could not proceed along that route. If they wished to leave Buthidaung, they would have to take a diferent path, and the Arakan Army specifcally told them where they could and could not go. That night, the people of Buthidaung were made to sit and stay there for the entire night. During that time, another horrifc event occurred. Due to a disagreement, the 40 people who were separated were taken by the Arakan Army. From that moment on, no one ever heard from those 40 individuals. Many others who stayed in that location overnight died due to a lack of food and medical care. The Arakan Army did not provide a single meal to anyone that night. The following morning, they forced the people of Buthidaung to leave and relocated them to a distant area. This was the severe persecution of the residents of Buthidaung by the Arakan Army on March 17, 2024.

On that night, there was a village in Buthidaung called Taimma Hali. This is my village. On the night of March 17, Arakan Army launched a horrifc attack on Taimma Hali. The village was bordered by mountains on three sides and rice felds on the other. From their position in the mountains, the Arakan Army opened fre on all three sides of the village and launched bomb attacks using drones. For not even 20 minutes did the Arakan Army stop fring. They continuously showered the village with bullets throughout the night. The residents of Taimma Hali could not even lift their heads to walk. They abandoned their homes and tried to sleep in the rice felds. Their homes were burning to the ground. At that time, around 30 villages, seeking safety, had taken refuge in Taimma Hali. Many children, women, and elderly people were trapped in their homes and burned alive that night.

In the early morning, the Arakan Army entered the village from the mountains, shooting and killing the wounded lying on the village roads. They conducted a search in every corner of the village, gathering all the living residents into the rice felds. Then, when three doctors from the Burma community came to treat the injured, the Arakan Army took them away to a distant spot, slaughtered them, and killed them. The villagers who had fed to the mountains for safety were also killed there. The bodies of the killed residents were gathered in one place and burned. The remaining survivors were told they could not stay there and were driven out. They were taken to Narayasingh area on March 18. These people then set up shelters in Narayasingh and nearby areas, but they had no food supplies. The Arakan Army did not provide them with even a single grain of food.

Drones, such as these being prepared by the 'Federal Wings' militia, are widespread in the Myanmar civil war, killing soldiers and civilians alike. Photo: Federal Wings FB.

The Arakan Army mostly uses drones for attacks, along with various weapons, bombs, and mines. On the other hand, the Myanmar military uses jet fghters, as well as various types of small and large weapons, mines, and other equipment.

Regarding the Arakan Army, they say, "Arakan is the land of our ancestors, taken from them almost 240 years ago, and now we will reclaim this region. There is no place for Rohingyas here. Rohingyas have no place in this region." Currently, the situation for Rohingyas living in the Maungdaw and Buthidaung areas is horrifc. A curfew has been imposed on them, and they are only allowed to reside in certain designated areas given by the Arakan Army. If they step outside these designated areas, they are arrested and then imprisoned. They are detained for three months, during which they face severe torture. Prisoners are provided with only one meal per day. The situation of the Rohingyas living under the Arakan Army's rule in Maungdaw and Buthidaung is indescribable. The Arakan Army conducts searches in the areas where Rohingyas live on a daily basis. During these searches, many Rohingyas are arrested on false charges, such as collaborating with the military, supporting the Rohingya armed forces, or burning the homes of the Mro ethnic group. The arrested individuals are presented in court based on these false accusations. The Arakan Army has a separate department called ULA (United Liberation Army), which administers governance in the region. The court, which operates under this department, issues verdicts on the false charges against the Rohingyas under the direction of prominent members of the Mro community, called the Arian Committee. The detained individuals are presented in court three times, and most of the time, they are sent to prison for seven years by ULA.

Since the day the Arakan Army took control of Buthidaung, they have looted from the general public whenever and however they pleased. For example, if someone was riding a motorcycle, they would demand the vehicle, saying, "Give me this vehicle," and would take it away. This is how they oppressed people. After a few days, they would come together for meetings and discussions. When the Rohingya elders would say, "We want to live peacefully" (they do not use the word "Rohingya," they use "Muslim community"), they would respond, saying, "Those of you who want to live peacefully can live, but those who have committed crimes, such as collaborating with ARSA, aiding the military, or providing food and children to support them, cannot live in peace, and we will punish them in any way possible. They will not be allowed to stay here. However, those who were not involved in such activities can stay, but everyone else who was involved in these activities will be opposed by us."

The Rohingya elders asked them, "Why are there seven stars in your logo? Why seven communities? Where is our community in your fag? We are also a community here, why aren't there eight stars in your logo?" In response, they said, "You will not understand these things, they are beyond your comprehension. If you want to live under us, you must follow all the rules we have made. And those who have done wrong will not be allowed to stay here, our

Buthidaung and Maungdaw in northern Rakhine state (Arakan). Sittwe is the capital of Rakhine state.

laws are clear for them."

After the Arakan Army took control of Maungdaw and Buthidaung, they killed about 2,500 to 3,000 ordinary people in these areas. The most deaths occurred in places like Buachiri, Neragu, and Fuyimali. In Maungdaw, around 1,000 to 1,500 people were killed. On the day the Arakan Army took over Buthidaung, they killed at least 100 people in the town. According to the Arakan Army's law, those who were aligned with the government, worked with the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), or supported the military, will be sentenced to seven years in prison. Anyone caught working with ARSA or the military will be sentenced to twenty years in prison.

I have seen people die from the Arakan Army's gunfre, and there are also injured people in the current camp. The families of those who died from their gunfre are in the camp, and the families of the injured are also there. The Arakan Army, which carries a fag with seven stars for seven communities, does not include the Rohingya in these seven communities. They do not address us as Rohingya; instead, they refer to us as "Muslim Kawm" (Muslim community). They also say that they will address the issue of the Rohingya later.

Another thing I cannot understand is that the Arakan Army has a group whose goal is to reduce the Muslim population. I have met with them personally, although they don't explicitly say they belong to that group. However, during an argument, one of them accidentally mentioned that they were part of the group. I heard this from the leader of that Muslim-reduction group. This committee is working towards their goal. For example, they go around the areas of Arakan, asking people if they want to leave for foreign countries like Bangladesh, Malaysia, or Rangoon. They say, "Let us know, we'll help you cross, but you have to pay us ten lakhs in Burmese currency and then give us fve to ten lakhs for the travel costs, and we'll send you over."

For instance, it costs 25 lakhs to get to Bangladesh, and the Arakan Army takes ten lakhs as their share, then the remaining 15 lakhs is used to send the person to Bangladesh. The people involved in this are part of the committee formed to reduce the Muslim population. We, the people in the camp, are under their control. There are two groups within the Arakan Army: one is the AA fghters, and the other is ULA, which takes on the role of the government. Both groups share the same goal: to eliminate or reduce the Muslim population.

We can understand their objective when they forcibly remove Muslims from an area and tell them, "You cannot stay here; the land belongs to the Baghis. Go somewhere else." They then bring in people from the Mro, Chakma, and Marung communities to replace them. This shows that their ultimate goal is to fnish of the Muslims or reduce their numbers. In their soldiers' areas, there is a banner that says, "Earth cannot fnish people, but people can fnish other people." They continue to work with this ideology and these principles. This is their politics, this is their policy.

Currently, the Rohingya people living in Maungdaw and Buthidaung are sufering immensely. They are facing extreme hardships with food, mobility, and medical care. No aid or supplies are coming from outside. It's not just Muslims people of all communities there are going through severe distress. Even amidst all this sufering, certain individuals are being targeted those who are educated, wealthy, or well-known in the community are being abducted. Their families have no idea what happens to them afterward. No one is able to show or speak about the oppression they face. People are living with constant fear for their lives. I realized I was also being targeted, so I escaped and came to the camp for safety.

Back there, there is no food, no medical support, and no basic services. I can't even express in words how much they are sufering. Just like the Myanmar government never accepted us as Rohingya, the Rakhine people (locally known as "Mog") are also behaving the same way. They are following the same rules of exclusion. They do not recognize us as Rohingya. When we try to coexist with the Rakhine and the Burmese, they turn against us

and say, “These Bengalis cannot live in our land.” They made this claim loudly in 2017.

Now we realize that behind every wave of Rohingya displacement 1992, 2008, 2012, 2017 there was the hand of the Rakhine. Even if they did not directly force us out, they manipulated the Myanmar government to do it. Between 2010 and 2020, they wrote many books that insulted the Rohingya, portrayed us with hatred, called us “guests,” and claimed we came from Bangladesh. They planted this narrative to fuel hatred in the hearts of the younger generation of Rakhines, so they would oppose the Rohingya. Now we see clearly how calculated and intentional this was.

The historical killing of 70,000 Rohingya in 1942 was not carried out by the Burmese government, it was done by the Rakhine community. Now it is clear that they have always wanted us out. Since 1962, they have been influencing the Burmese government to push us to this point. However, now in 2024, it seems the Myanmar government is starting to understand that much of what the Rakhine claimed about us was false. They are beginning to see that the reasons behind forcing the Rohingya out of the country were mostly based on lies.

If we are ever to return to our country, we do not want to go back under the hands of the Rakhine. We want to return under the authority of the Myanmar government, because at least they may not treat us with the same cruelty as the Rakhine. Even the Arakan Army is giving the Rohingya no peace or protection. Our people can no longer explain their suffering to anyone, nor can they show the world what is happening. The Rohingya people are being silenced, trapped in a life of fear and quiet destruction.

I want to share one more thing. I have a friend who is an officer in the Arakan Army's MI (Military Intelligence) line. He was called to a meeting where one of his senior brothers told him that the Rakhine people have a vision to transform Arakan by 2040 into something like Saudi Arabia, Israel, or Singapore. By comparing it to Saudi Arabia, they mean that, just like in the past Arabia had people from many religions, and Prophet Muhammad united them into one nation, they too want to turn Arakan into a single, unified ethnicity. By comparing it to Israel, they mean they want to become strong and powerful like them. And by Singapore, they mean they want to be economically developed. These are their hopes and ambitions.

That friend of mine, who is also my nephew, told me, “Uncle, their future plans are very dangerous. Their intentions are not good at all. Even though I am with them now because of political reasons, I will not be able to stay here much longer. I think I will have to come to the camp very soon.” That was the last conversation I had with him. That’s all I wanted to share with you. I hope you understand the seriousness of it.

Reflection & Further Reading

Reading this testimony, I am reminded that what we see in Myanmar is not an isolated case of ethnic hatred, but a reflection of systemic oppression rooted in power, militarization, and exclusion. We must learn from this that silence and neutrality only strengthen the hands of oppressors. The struggle of the Rohingya people connects deeply to global struggles for justice, equality, and self-determination. It teaches us that solidarity must transcend borders, that our collective voice, especially from socialist and anti-imperialist perspectives, can expose and resist the machinery of genocide. Australian and international comrades, by understanding the social, political, and economic forces at play, can stand with the Rohingya people more effectively and help amplify their call for justice, recognition, and freedom.

In conclusion, the testimony of Bosher Ullah is not just a personal story of survival, it is a mirror reflecting the systemic destruction of an entire community. It exposes the ongoing persecution that remains largely invisible to the world. We must document, learn, and act upon these truths to ensure that the struggle of the Rohingya people is not forgotten. Justice and protection for the Rohingya must be understood as part of the global fight against ethnic cleansing, capitalism, and imperialism. Only through unity and awareness can we prevent such atrocities from repeating. This documentation, therefore, serves not only as evidence but also as a call to conscience for all humanity.

- “Myanmar Rohingya: What you need to know about the crisis”, *BBC*, 2020
- “Rohingya ‘genocide intensifying’ as war rages in Myanmar’s Rakhine: BROUK”, *Al Jazeera*, 2024
- “Caught between the military junta and Arakan Army: Rohingyas and the fight for Myanmar’s Rakhine state”, *LINKS*, 2025 ■

Rising Tide & the Left

Having previously explained the momentum model and Rising Tide's politics, ***Max J*** *writes on how Rising Tide engages with the Left, and how the Left engages with Rising Tide in turn.*

Socialists are unclear on how to relate to and engage with Rising Tide, and groups like it. Organisations such as Socialist Alternative and their electoral front The Socialists aim to cozy up with Rising Tide and its few hundred activists, in the hopes of winning them away from the Greens and using their activist celebrity power to win more votes. Similarly, Socialist Alliance also aims to win over Rising Tide activists, but with a comfortable second preference from the Greens.

Communist groups such as the RCO, the CPA, and others, have more mixed approaches to Rising Tide. While the RCO supports workers taking action against climate change, we deviate from the environmentalists on several key issues. RCO members have made clear their criticisms of Rising Tide and the broader environmentalist movement, while advocating for a critical engagement with it. RCO members from its Newcastle section were present at the 2023 and 2024 blockades, while hosting a stall at the latter alongside members of the Freedom Socialist Party (who issued a statement in support of Rising Tide and the blockade).

While the CPA has made no mention of Rising Tide, its members were present at the 2023 and 2024 blockades, hosting their own pavilion at the latter. With no official statements on Rising Tide or the environmentalist movement of the 2020s, it can only be inferred that the CPA is broadly supportive of Rising Tide and the movement writ large. This is supported by the CPA's endorsement of the Greens in the 2025 federal election.

Crucial to developing a socialist perspective on Rising Tide, and developing a strategy of engaging with them, is understanding their politics, their base, and how they view themselves as a project. We can neither dismiss them outright, nor take them at their word. Once we develop a socialist perspective on Rising Tide, we can engage with them in a way that aligns with our strategy of building class power.

Rising Tide's engagements with the Left have been few and far between. Rising Tide has attended ostensibly left-wing protests, especially those around Palestine. To their credit, many Rising Tide activists are also involved in pro-Palestine groups, in particular the Palestine Action Groups based in each major city (including Newcastle). Up until recently, there was no official engagement between Rising Tide and the Left (as in, the organised socialist left).

Launching of Rising Tide's documentary *The First Wave* at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, April 2024. Photo: Rising Tide FB

Since the nation-wide expansion of their electoral front in Victoria, Socialist Alternative has made a strong push to seemingly win over Rising Tide activists. Or at the very least, they've made a push to try and ingratiate themselves with Rising Tide. The NSW Socialists launch in July 2025 included amongst its speakers Zack Schofeld, a long-time environmentalist activist from Newcastle, and organiser within Rising Tide.

Schofeld was also a speaker at a 'politics in the pub' event hosted by the NSW Socialists Newcastle on October 19th. Socialist Alternative has put much work into warming themselves up with Rising Tide activists like Schofeld – in spite of the refusal of these activists to join the party. In a recent Red Flag article written by Lily Campbell (a Socialist Alternative member now based in Newcastle), Schofeld is given a softball interview about Rising Tide and the

The 2024 Rising Tide blockade at Foreshore Park, Newcastle. Photo: WSWS.org

CPA Newcastle Branch at Rising Tide blockade 2024. Photo: CPA NSW FB.

Joint RCO-FSP stall at Rising Tide blockade in 2024. Photo: RCO Newcastle

activism around it.

The most interesting part of this interview is the end. In it, Schofeld makes a few statements. His frst statement, that "materialist politics are critical to understanding how the world works and how change happens", is uncontroversial. Interestingly, he attempts to tie Rising Tide into the "tradition" of organised, mass action that the socialist movement has: "Socialists understand that change doesn't come from ideas alone or radicalism alone; it comes from actually becoming powerful enough and accessible enough to as many people as possible to shape the dominant politics of the day."

This statement helps contrast the views of Rising Tide and its activists with those of the organised socialist movement. While Rising Tide believes in social ecosystems, that activists have special roles in the ecosystem, and that change is made by an active minority winning over a passive majority, socialists, or at the very least serious communists, believe the opposite. Communists support the mass action of the working class, and we aim to foster this mass action through comprehensive political education and putting forward a program worth fghting for. While Rising Tide's leading activists search the realm for "weavers", "experimenters" or "builders", communists aim to organise the 'advanced workers' (working class people who are already politically conscious and active), and raise the rest of the working class to that 'advanced' level. The diference couldn't be more day and night.

Socialist Alternative's push toward winning over Rising Tide activists is not unsurprising. Rising Tide activists are experienced organisers, experienced in the environmentalist movement, experienced dealing with legal challenges (to their credit, they've managed to fght anti-democratic anti-protest laws in NSW), and have greater ties to the rest of the activist scene than Socialist Alternative. This is in spite of Rising Tide organising in the milieu that Socialist Alternative would otherwise dismiss as "the swamp". Socialist Alternative aims to bring Rising Tide activists into their electoral front, to beneft from their activist experience, and to use them as part of a springboard into national relevance.

However, it is remarkable that Socialist Alternative is succeeding where the other sects have failed. While Socialist Alliance can get Rising Tide activists to speak at their events, Alliance has hardly been able to use (for example) Zack Schofeld's platform for their potential electoral success. Despite their success in goading Rising Tide activists into platforming them (and vice versa), however, Rising Tide activists have no interest in joining The Socialists (beyond one or two exceptions).

Communists and Rising Tide

The political diferences between communists and Rising Tide could not be more obvious. Communists view the working class, that being the class of people reliant on the wage fund, as their central subject. In contrast, Rising Tide views "the people" as their central subject, and organises their populist and green slogans around this. While communists aim to organise the entire class, lifting all working class people to an 'advanced' level, Rising Tide seeks to organise a militant minority of activists of all ages – and all classes.

Rising Tide and Socialist Alternative/The Socialists seem to get along so well as they have a few core similarities, this being that their form of activism tries to seek out special individuals who they can elevate to near celebrity status. The environmentalist movement has done this to Greta Thunberg (to her credit, a principled activist), and has long sought out a 'new' Thunberg from which they

can propel themselves into international relevance. In The Socialists, the entry of Jordan Van Den Lamb into the Victorian Socialists as a senate candidate has irreparably changed the orientation of The Socialists forever. Every The Socialists event includes some kind of mention of Jordan Van Den Lamb, more recently the announcement of The Socialists attending the blockade. Glowing praise is given to Thunberg and Van Den Lamb in The Socialists, and it could very well be that the Socialist Alternative leadership of The Socialists sees in Schofeld the next Van Den Lamb or Thunberg.

Communists should orient themselves critically to Rising Tide. Just as we are critical of the left-labor union leadership, the Labor Party and the Greens, we should be critical of the professional activist leadership and its silent bureaucracy. This is a layer that is resistant to revolutionary change on anyone's terms except their own, and as we see through the momentum model, it is a layer with a disjointed, incorrect view of the world. This layer of activist leadership, with the wrong ideas, can only lead activists and potential militants toward disaster, and has done so repeatedly. The constant cycle of 'civil disobedience' activism, where activists purposefully get arrested to "send a statement", is unsustainable in the long. Smaller groups that have attempted this, such as Blockade Australia (which now survives through organising activist 'fronts' framed as "grassroots organising spaces"), have been

Rising Tide is an up and coming 'civil disobedience' activist group which hosts the "People's Blockade", an activist festival which involves rafts and kayaks in the hunter river to prevent the entry of coal ships. This year, I counted many coal ships which 'broke the blockade', so it seemed that the blockade was no blockade at all. So why did RCO comrades along with FSP members host a stall at the festival anyway?

The not-quite-a-blockade brings together a variety of people from various backgrounds, from politically engaged students (both high school and university), to elderly activists, indigenous activists, random members of the public, etc. During our stall, we were able to leafet and have conversations with all sorts of politically engaged people who more or less were at least sympathetic to a communist perspective, even if they didn't have all the details worked out in their heads. A great gathering of that many people who are politically engaged in one way or another (even if it isn't the right way) is the sort of event communists should be going to, to have a presence and spread communist politics. To refuse to go to events such as these is to leave these people to the mercy of Greens, adventurists, opportunists, reactionaries (of the 'overpopulation theorist' favor – Extinction Rebellion and Scientist Rebellion), etc. It would be to refuse to carry out one of the basic duties of communists: to intervene in all avenues of the struggle where working people are present and engaged.

While we can turn our noses at groups like Extinction Rebellion and Rising Tide, we can't deny that adventurist left-liberalism is attracting people to it. When people feel as if they can't intervene politically through the usual left-reformist means, they will turn to adventurism and in extreme cases, insurrectionism/terrorism (see: Blockade Australia et al). The Greens were also in attendance to fsh for voters, as they are prone to do. I myself saw Mehreen Fahruqi at the Greens stall (which, on the second day, was across from ours). We need to be there to present an alternative to left-reformism and left-opportunism/adventurism: a communist program for the working class to take power.

RCO and FSP comrades did an amazing job spreading communist and eco-socialist politics during this blockade. We also did a good job showing people that unity between communists is more than possible, something you wouldn't hear of if you only went to the CPA's otherwise middling stall. Our leafets were incredibly popular during the blockade, especially our 'eco-communism' booklet, which summarised the RCO's position on communist demands for the climate crisis. Leafets on the cost of living crisis, what communism was, and why capitalism is the problem were also popular.

Newcastle's Revolutionary Communists made their presence known this weekend, and we will most likely attend the next not-quite-a-blockade, with more leafets and hopefully more comrades. We hope that our partnership with comrades from the FSP is long-lasting and ends with a merger toward a mass workers party. ■ **"People's Blockade" no blockade at all, so why should we go anyway? Max J for Partisan, December 2024.**

Rising Tide activists paint "TAX ME" onto coal ship named *Climate Justice*. Photo: Rising Tide FB.

destroyed by it. Rising Tide only appears immune to this, as they grow at a rate in which they can overcome the attrition of mass arrests. But nothing lasts forever.

Communists need to be careful in their engagements with Rising Tide. Communists, unionists, and other militants are components within the momentum model's "ecosystem" structure, which also includes activists, small business owners, and progressive NGOs. Since we are just components in an ecosystem, Rising Tide is oriented toward convincing communists to attend their events and actions, since this brings variety. Rising Tide stands to benefit from bringing in experienced socialists and union organisers. As a result, Rising Tide activists, especially the older and more experienced activists, are adept at doing so. Zack Schofeld, for example, is a savvy political operator, and knows the right words, phrases and slogans to use to convince certain socialists to fall behind him. This is not to say that Schofeld isn't in some way sincere in his socialist-ish politics, but that due to the momentum model, it is impossible for him to openly be a socialist, or to join a socialist organisation, and he is incentivised to say whatever is necessary to get people to show up. Similar reasons are why Rising Tide cannot be socialist, even if its leading activists wanted it to be (they don't).

The Blockade

Rising Tide's blockades are far from advertised: as opposed to using militant action to block the coal ports and occupy a park in Newcastle (whether we should would want to block the coal port in the first place is a different question), they instead resemble a music festival. It is more accurate to describe them as Woodstock with less drugs and less people abusing or trying to kill each other. However, many in Rising Tide, despite decorating the blockade with radical sounding slogans, will often admit that the blockade isn't quite as intense or radical as they make it out to be.

In his interview with Red Flag, Schofeld states: "At the moment, the blockade is a form of civil disobedience, or storytelling with a material target. We're putting ourselves in the way of the problem to tell a story about why there's a problem and why people should do something about it. We impact the company's bottom line a bit, but not enough for it to really matter. The objective is to build that mass of organised people to the level of civil resistance, where we become a force to be negotiated with, rather than policed away. By growing our numbers, we can make a material impact and actually stop business as usual."

At the 2024 Blockade, Rising Tide activists were unable to completely block the channel, and multiple coal ships managed to pass by as the days progressed. In spite of the underwhelming nature of the blockade, we advocate for communists to go anyway. This is because communists have a duty to intervene in all avenues of the struggle, where working people are present and engaged. This includes the blockade, although when workers attend, they are misled by activists in Rising Tide.

The Blockade brings out thousands of people, many of whom are sympathetic to radical changes to the system, but are mislead by activists into supporting environmentalism. The presence of serious communists at the blockade provides an outlet for these sympathies. There is a growing trend in support of direct actionist politics in the left and soft-left. This is because people are viewing electoral politics as being insufficiently capable of solving pressing issues in society. As a result, activists are drawn towards adventurism (striking out against the system on their own or in small groups), or insurrectionism and terrorism. Blockade Australia was the result of this tendency, and it was not able to survive the resulting police suppression.

It may seem contradictory to state that Rising Tide wants to goad communists into going to their blockade, and then tell communists to go to the blockade anyway. This is only the case if you view the blockade as being a historically or politically significant event, which is not quite (it is too soon to say). Communists should attend the blockade without falling for Rising Tide's illusions of grandeur: the blockade is simply just another protest we attend to promote communist views and try to win sympathisers at.

With plans for the construction of a container

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terminal at the Newcastle port, it may very well seem that capitalism has decided to fix the issue for Rising Tide. Rising Tide's "solutions" to the climate crisis mirror that of its environmentalist contemporaries: tax fossil fuels, stop building new fossil fuels, recycle more often, ride a bike instead of driving, plant more trees, so on. But the communist solution to the climate crisis is to build a mass movement of working people that is willing to fundamentally and totally transform society. Communists aim to revolutionise production, taking it under democratic management. They aim to revolutionise consumption and distribution. Such a total transformation is against the interests of Rising Tide, who want there to be a liberal market economy for their friends in small business and the not-for-profit sector.

Communists need to be able to present a viable alternative to the misleaders in Rising Tide and beyond: a mass communist party with a Marxist program capable of leading the *working class* to power. ■

Communists and Rising Tide

***Kirsten** laments the small, but increasing presence of communism at Rising Tide, and discusses how communist involvement is needed in the environmental movement.*

Satirical drawing depicting the "climate activist merry-go-round". Drawn by the author.

The climate activist merry-go-round in Australia goes like this:

Disaster season (summer) destroys sections of Oceania in food, fire, smoke and/or heatwaves, taking lives, creating internally displaced evacuees who join climate activism with a vengeance (or blame cloud-seeding);

Summer into autumn is spent in training;

There are weeks of sustained Blockade Australia disruption, generally to the world's largest coal port, in winter;

followed by Rising Tide doing a mid-year coal train jump; followed by court battles to keep all climate and environmental activists as free from penalties and bail conditions as possible, which they should be;

followed by Rising Tide's court battles over their Notice of Intention (Form 1), a legal mechanism that in this context allows Rising Tide to block the shipping channel for a set period of time without arrest, combined with the Harbour Master shutting the port to coal ships and other large ships (these ships are too heavy to stop);

followed by the anarchist Climate COPout in Sydney at the same time as the yearly United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP);

Climate COPout being a series of workshops, rallies and bike processions that do not lodge a Notice of Intention;

Rising Tide wrestles with last-minute attempts by the NSW government to stop them, like a Marine Exclusion Zone this year that was overturned by the Supreme Court on the day it was set to begin;

Rising Tide blocks the world's largest coal port with a line of kayaks and at least a hundred activists are arrested;

Rising Tide's court dates are set for next year;

Blockade Australia finishes their severity appeals in the Newcastle District Court; in summer we swelter;

the disasters go again.

For this merry-go-round to be more fruitful, communists and anarcho-communists must join in the organising of Climate COPout and Rising Tide. There are local mini-groups of each group, and if you do not like organising with anarchists or reformists, form a red bloc with your buddy/s. My main critique isn't of Rising Tide, but that I think communists and anarchists have been lazy. Thankfully I think comrades are good enough sports to accept this. Someone has to scrub the kitchen fireplace and that is where you make friends. Be ambitious and bring a sail dinghy: our networks are strong enough that someone has

one.

Communism was more visible at Rising Tide this year, though unionism has taken a dive. One of the angriest and saddest demands against capitalism and the patriarchy, came at the nighttime beach vigil for murdered Naarm 19-year-old Isla Bell, whose uncle was on the way to Rising Tide when he received the call that her body had been found. Angry unionists stood on the windy beach on Saturday night and said 'I don't know where you all stand on this but CAPITALISM is to blame for this – and the PATRIARCHY'. I am furious at the death of Isla Bell and you should be too. Many at Rising Tide knew her or her uncle, and the leftwing community of Naarm searched for her. Femicide is constant in Australia and the coal ships should not be a distraction. Isla's uncle's friends say she would have supported Rising Tide.

Rising Tide's spokes-council did not vote to support the CFMEU, and the reasons for that are more complex than 'we are petty bourgeoisie who hate the unions'. Failing to support the unions does show a lack of long-term vision, but it is also bad politics for forestry workers to shoot at forest activists.

I spoke to an on-shift dock worker who agreed with Rising Tide's climate protests. He was against the NSW anti-protest laws, and compared it to the police busting the dock strikes, though said his crew thought diferently. (He seemed against immigrant workers, but a start's a start.) A surly boy said on the phone nearby 'it's a protest about Palestine or some shit' and was more annoyed by loud girls scaring away his fsh. A child delightedly and angrily told us that a seagull ate the fsh he released, while his dad was not a fan of anyone stopping ships, but could see why someone kept a look-out through binoculars.

What's most important are the people on the outside of the protest. The dock worker complained that no one thought to notice them or ask if they supported. There were fewer hecklers than last year. It reminded me of how annoyed I am when street marches address their message at the people in suits, when the people who matter are painting the building walls, serving cofee and working in the chemist. The best fyering at Climate COPout was for those people. I am done with loudspeakers wasting words on the ruling class.

We must get rid of the irrelevant king and his family, plan our economy, and practise airships and solar-and-wind powered transport ships on the harbours. That's a better vision than telling people to 'degrow'. ■

It's no mystery that working people across the world are having a tough time. We are having to deal with stagnating wages, a housing crisis, increasing cost of living, political instability, and a general feeling of unease. For Pasifka workers, there are even more problems to deal with: sending money back home, visa troubles, racism in and out of the workplace, and conservative communities dominated by church leaders. It could seem like everything is 'fucked up beyond all recognition'. But it doesn't have to be this way: a better way is possible.

The movements for democracy in the Pacifc have had ebbs and fows. It has had to compete against European and American colonialism, as well as domestic infghting between democratic and anti-democratic forces. Across the Pacifc, workers and toilers lack parties of their own, and are forced to align with whichever ruling class party abuses them the least. They have had their democratic aspirations squandered by corrupt or weak liberal governments, and in the worst cases (such as Fiji), have had them smashed and stolen from them by military gangs.

In Tonga, the democratic movement struggles to make substantial progress. This is in spite of democratic reforms which were undertaken since 2010, and despite the democratic movement being elected to power through the 2010s. Why is it that even though 'pro-democracy' parties are elected to power in the Pacifc, little progress is made in terms of democratic reform? It is because these parties are not parties of and for workers and toilers. They are instead parties of the ruling class: the government bureaucrats, the chiefs, the nobles, the generals, the admirals, and the police.

Together, these forces act to restrain the aspirations of workers and toilers for democratic reform. They act against movements fghting for transparency in government, national ownership of utilities and industry, increased wages for workers, an end to foreign military presence, women's freedom, and more. Because workers and toilers lack a party of their own, they are unable to fght back against these forces.

But the people are not stupid, they can tell they're being played for fools. This is why many in Tonga

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The Rising Tide ‘Protestival’

Mila Volkova *critiques the orientation of the yearly Rising Tide ‘Protestival” as it stands. She claims that while the festival is an expression of intense and justified emotions, it simply acts as a yearly “cleansing ritual”, and that it needs an explicitly revolutionary socialist political orientation if it is to achieve change.*

There is revolutionary potential in every atmosphere of love and joy, but it is not subversive in and of itself. This is the lesson to be drawn from Rising Tide’s ‘protestival’.

From the 21st – 24th of November, Newcastle harbour shook with joyful marches, environmentalist music, and the laughter of children. Rising Tide planned the action, an environmentalist group that has been around for more than twenty years. Our goal was to block the Newcastle Coal Port, which is responsible for 1% of all global emissions. For a handful of hours, activists aboard kayaks and ships delayed travel through the port.

It was difficult not to come away from the protestival without feeling cynical. There were such enormous expressions of joy. Yet so little was achieved. It seems unlikely that very much will be achieved in Rising Tide, while it remains limited to protest politics. Criticisms of capitalism were common, but were followed by calls to action to get in a kayak, or vote Greens, or to keep holding rallies. We have been doing this for so long, when will it work?

Many environmentalists, especially those who are older, appreciate the party atmosphere. They are probably tired of the sober and, eventually, ineffectual civil rights and anti-war movements. War continues. The gap has not closed. We chant, “never again!” as more women and queers are murdered.

The protestival offered many a chance to express their frustrations. To keep the fire alive in their hearts and find common community with others who feel their pain. A chance to laugh, cry, and rage. Many expressed how Rising Tide demonstrated that they, “will not be silenced!”

But who is listening? What is the role of these emotions, when there is no revolutionary struggle? It seems more like a catholic confession, where the sinner breaks the church’s doctrine yet reimposes it by guiltily admitting it to a priest.

Rising Tide is a yearly purification of ourselves. We party, we protest, we pray for absolution in the form of legal reform, and we go home feeling better about ourselves, without making a difference.

Flag of Palestine at the 2024 Rising Tide blockade. Photo: Max J.

Nonetheless, for all of the rationalism of Marxism, it would be a mistake to de-emphasise the role that love, rage, melancholy, and yearning all play in the building of revolutions. Love is an expanding of horizons. In every act of love, there is an opportunity to understand the struggles of another. To link their struggle to your’s.

Through loving those close to us, we have an opportunity to love all humanity. This is the qualitative change in mindset required for revolutionary thinking, to realise the commonality of all the exploited, and the universality of their struggle for freedom. It means to define oneself in one’s own terms. To organise and take power for ourselves. To make our vision of the world true, rather than beg for inclusion into theirs.

Revolutions are built on people tired of losing those they love to war, starvation, violence, destruction, prejudice, loneliness. They are built on those who demand an end to the killing. Those who imagine a brighter future.

The protestival was a collective of people sharing a common grief. In this way, it has revolutionary potential. Communists should continue to agitate for revolutionary consciousness in Rising Tide for this reason. There was a larger Communist presence at Rising Tide this year and this is promising. But few at the protestival really imagine a revolution, or social transformation. Regardless of what they say, they demand modest reforms.

These demands are truly demands in the sense they are asking something of someone else. People do not imagine themselves as

question the leadership of the so-called Democratic Party. But without a viable alternative, they instead vote for independents, or splinter parties run by corrupt politicians. The corrupt and inept leadership of the democratic movements of the Pacifc need to be overturned, and replaced by revolutionary socialist leadership.

Revolutionary socialism is the complete transformation of society, politics, and the economy. It overturns the system of private property and market economics that dominates the globe, and puts in its place a social, co-operative economy, governed democratically by working people. It replaces a government run by church ministers, nobles, chiefs, and politicians, with a government run by working people themselves. Socialists are democrats because we aim to establish a radically democratic system, called Socialism/ Communism. This is a system built on popular sovereignty, the rule of the working class.

The struggle for revolutionary socialist leadership in the Pacifc is going to be a long struggle. The Pacifc does not have a long tradition of socialist politics to draw from, it must instead draw from the political traditions of the rest of the world – not as a model to follow directly, but as an example of how the working class can struggle for power. This is why we're launching Temokalati (Democracy): to act as a platform of revolutionary socialists in and around the Pacifc.

Temokalati has two main purposes: to promote revolutionary socialist politics in the Pacifc, and to inform the rest of the world of what Pasifka democrats are struggling for. But while we support, promote and highlight struggles in the Pacifc, we aim to 'connect the dots' and help people understand that the struggle for democracy in the Pacifc is not a lone struggle. It is instead part of a global struggle for revolutionary change and transformation.

The Pacifc democrats of the past have promised democratic reform, but have only been able to provide peanuts. They are not capable of providing real democratic change for workers in the Pacifc, because they aim to take control of the capitalist machinery on behalf of foreign imperialists, whether they reside in Canberra, Washington D.C, or Beijing. These imperialists, who reside in the 'Pacifc rim' (the regions surrounding the Pacifc, such as Australia, China, S.E. Asia, and the U.S.), want to keep Pasifka workers oppressed and exploited.

The Democratic movement in Tonga has a history of putting their thoughts and politics to paper: from Kalaf Moala's Taimi 'o Tonga, to 'Akilisi Pohiva's Kele'a. Temokalati hopes to be a paper for the Pasifka Left, promoting a revolutionary socialist viewpoint, in solidarity with the workers and toilers of the world, who also struggle for democracy and freedom. ■

Introducing: Temokalati, Temokalati Magazine, October 13 2025.

taking power for themselves, and of imposing their vision for a better world. It's as if everyone is waiting for something to happen or for the capitalist state to fnally start listening.

Palestine rallies have begun to serve this purpose too. The rhetoric has changed from lively demands for an end to complicity, to solemn recognition of complicity. Feeling powerless, we satisfy ourselves that at least we stood vigil and didn't turn away from the sufering, unlike the others. Pride parades adopt this tone too. We remember the fallen, and we wait for someone else to save us. These are symptoms of our powerlessness.

But powerlessness is an illusion and a self-fulflling prophecy. We make this world. Constantly, every day, we make the choice to let it continue or not. Just as easily, we can decide to unmake it. Grief for those we have lost, and love for those we wish not to, can be the driving force of genuine transformation.

Rather than shying away from the antics of the protestival, Communists should embrace them. This is not to say that we should shy away from criticism. On the contrary, we should point out to Rising Tide goers that only revolution can ofer them what they seek. We should welcome the partying and go even further!

We must argue that limiting ourselves to therapy, confession, protest, and partying would dishonour our grief and love. Absent of the struggle, these things trap us in the very system that denigrates us. We are in an abusive relationship. We must make the argument that the only true resolution to grief is revolution, and that the only true realisation of love is communism. ■

The Agrarian Question in the Second International and in Russia

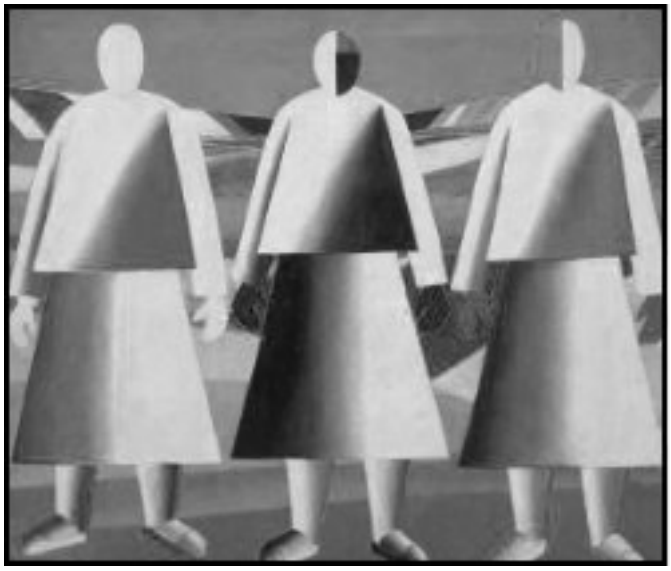
The following is the second part of our republication of Loren Goldner's 2016 article on the agrarian question and theoretical underdevelopment in the Russian Revolution. We hope that it is of use to comrades, as we puzzle through the agrarian question and its relationship to the struggle for socialism today. I will allow Goldner himself to speak on his project:

"*Only in 2010 did the world's rural population drop below 50 percent of the total. The great majority of those remaining in the countryside are petty-producer peasants, artisans and rural proletarian laborers. Considering only India and China, with close to 40 percent of the world's population between them, it is clear that the "agrarian question," on a world scale, remains central to any possible creation of a renewed communism. This is all the more urgent in light of the one million people a day who arrive from the countryside in the world's cities, as capitalism increasingly makes their way of life unviable and draws them into a dubious future in the world's shantytowns or China's 270 million migrant workers.*

To reconnect with the political and social realities of the world's rural population, both historically and for today, in a project to create a viable, non-developmentalist Marxism for the world after Stalinism, Maoism and Third Worldism, also takes us back to another largely forgotten dimension of Marx: the critique of the separation of city and countryside as a fundamental alienation, the separation of the producers from their means of production in the 16th and 17th century as "the " original alienation to be overcome in a future "activity as all-sided in its production as in its consumption," Marx's call for the "more even distribution of the population around the earth's surface" (Communist Manifesto) when cities, owing their existence to the centralization of capital, can be superseded, and finally, and hardly last, the ever more pressing question of the environment."

Comrades in the Revolutionary Communist Organisation and elsewhere would do well to study the agrarian question today, beginning with an account of how the Marxist position on the agrarian question developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Edith Fischer, Editor



K.S. Malevich, Girls in a Field, 1928-29

Karl Kautsky's 1899 book The Agrarian Question set down the "official Marxist" position on that subject for the world socialist movement prior to World War I. It is symptomatic of a whole, industry-centered sensibility that the book was largely forgotten within a decade, despite Marx's earlier extensive comments on the agrarian world in volumes I and III of Capital and in Theories of Surplus Value, especially on the question of ground rent, and his insistence (against common coin on the left to this day) that there were three classes in society: capitalists (who live from profits), proletarians (who live from wages) and landlords (who live from ground rent). For Marx, as indicated in our preface, the violent separation "in fire and blood" of the English peasantry from its means of production, in the process of primitive accumulation, was the original separation to be overcome in communism, and the "more equal distribution of the population over the surface of the earth" (Communist Manifesto) would be the overcoming of the fundamental (and also largely forgotten) alienation between city and countryside.

Kautsky's book was, among other things, a polemic (without mentioning names) against some right-wingers in the SPD such as the Bavarian members David and Vollmar, who already in the early 1890s (following the re-legalization of the party in 1890) were calling for a peasant program.

Kautsky became known as the "Torquemada" of the SPD on the agrarian question, whose message was that the workers'

movement had nothing to say to petty bourgeois peasants, a class doomed to disappear into the polarization of a rural bourgeoisie and rural wage-labor proletariat. Peasants could at best look forward to being integrated into cooperatives after the working class seized power. A significant part of small peasant produce was for family consumption, and the sector was an important source of primitive accumulation for the system as a whole. In his early formulations, Kautsky strongly argued that in agriculture as in industry, bigger was better, and discounted the survivability of highly productive family farms. The task of socialists was to neutralize the peasantry as a social force, not to mobilize it.

Interestingly, the factions within the SPD on the question of a peasant program were not aligned in the typical left-to-right spectrum that emerged at the end of the 1890s in the "revisionism" debate or later. Left-wingers Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht both sided with Vollmar in advocating an agrarian program at the 1895 party congress, but the party supported Kautsky. Ferdinand Lassalle's old formulation that all classes except workers are "one reactionary mass"—a view attacked in Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program —was also a backdrop to the discussion.

In the long run, Kautsky's view of the inevitable disappearance of the smallholder peasant was refuted in the prospering modern farms of countries such as Austria and Denmark. It was far more problematic when Lenin applied it to Russia.

In the 1890s, Lenin shared Kautsky's views on the peasants (and just about everything else). This is particularly curious, since he spent the years 1887–1893, (after his older brother's execution for involvement in a plot to assassinate the Tsar), in several provincial towns where apparently the last survivors of the Populist and terrorist group Zemla i Volya (to whom Marx had been sympathetic in their years of peak activity 1878–188142), and Marxists mingled in rather comradely form. (It is significant that at this time, the term "Narodnik," which later came to be known strictly and pejoratively as the term for a pro-peasant and subjective romantic, idealizing the commune and downplaying the advance of capitalism in Russia, originally meant anyone concerned with the affairs of the common people; only after the polemics of the last phase of Populism did it acquire its negative overtones.) Lenin, opposing even his mentor Plekhanov, distinguished himself during the famine of 1891–92 by his attacks on humanitarian attempts in "progressive" circles to help the stricken peasantry, reaffirming the supposedly Marxist position that the peasantry was a doomed social class and its disappearance should not be hindered, so that capitalism could complete its work.

This is especially significant because there is no doubt that Lenin had read deeply in the Russian Populist tradition, going back to the 1850s/1860s writings of Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov. According to different people who knew him personally, Lenin read Chernyshevsky's proto-socialist realist novel What Is To Be Done? many times. The turgid, intentionally anti-aesthetic novel tells the story of young people of the generation of the 1860s who break with their bourgeois families to live communally, supporting themselves with Fourierist artisanal collectives. It inspired tens of thousands of readers to follow that model for their life choices in the stifling oppression of Tsarist Russia. Of further significance is the character Rakhmetov, a veritable prototype of Lenin, a full-time, austere revolutionary. The title of Lenin's 1902 pamphlet What Is To Be Done? is an obvious homage to Cherneshevski's book., however different the content.

Lenin spent several years in the late 1890s in Siberian exile, during which he wrote his first major work, The Development of Capitalism in Russia (1899), which is often mistaken for his definitive views on the peasantry, whereas they later evolved considerably under the impact of events. Lenin in this book is at pains to show that, contrary to the lingering views of the Populists, capitalism had fully triumphed in Russia.

The work is deeply flawed by a largely "market" (as opposed to value) view of what capitalism is. The mir, which at the time constituted four-fifths of all cultivated land in European Russia, is barely mentioned, since for Lenin it was merely a "juridical imposition" of the Tsarist state. The large foreign loans and rapid industrial development under the management of Finance Minister Witte are also unmentioned. Lenin winds up concluding that fully 51 percent of the Russian population consists of wage labor proletarians, and that the polarization of rich peasant capitalists and rural laborers in the countryside is largely complete.

Lenin includes all peasants "almost" separated from their means of production in the category of poor peasants, meaning that any peasant with a tiny plot, owning a horse and a cow, barely supporting himself and his family, and elsewhere performing occasional wage labor a few months of the year, was a

"proletarian." The large estates, for Lenin, were rapidly becoming capitalist, when in fact the big landowners were alien to any idea of accumulation and profitability of capital. Lenin also sees "technological progress" where in fact the peasants were working with very simple, primitive implements long in use.

If the manorial estates were largely capitalist, how to explain the restrictions on peasants' mobility, tying them to one place, as had always been the case with serfs? Lenin's view of capitalism was limited to the sphere of circulation alone. Already in his first text of 1893 ("New Economic Transformations in Peasant Life") Lenin had asserted that the mir was no obstacle to capitalism:

"We are in no way interested in the form of landed property among the peasants. Whatever the form, the relationship between the peasant bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat is always the same."

During this period, according to Chantal de Crisenoy, individual peasant plots were actually in decline and the communes retained all their importance.

As Crisenoy puts it:

"By denying all specificity to the mir, Lenin shows himself more attached to preconceived ideas ...than attentive to existing social relations... In his analysis, we find a total inversion of reality: everything that is a factor of primitive accumulation –mandatory services, taxes—is seen as a "survival" blocking the emergence of capitalism; everything that is an obstacle to the appearance of capital—the handicraft industries, the rural commune—is designated as being "its most profound basis."

In the 1897 article "What heritage do we renounce?" Lenin presents the mir as "a village of small agrarians";

"...when he wants to prove, against the populists, the existence of a working class in the midst of the obschina, he advances the concept of the "sedentary proletarian" and applies it to these same communal peasants... In 1899 he finds three times the number of wage workers generally accepted on the eve of 1914.

Lenin, however, was (with Trotsky) one of the few Russian Marxists who felt it necessary to devote any serious attention at all to the peasantry, against the dismissive attitude of Plekhanov. In 1902, several provinces rose up in response to famine, and Lenin at the same time drafted the first program addressed to the peasantry, "The Agrarian Program of Russian Social Democracy" adopted by the party in 1903. He remained ambivalent on the peasants' future role, seeing them as either supporting a "revolutionary democratic" party or lining up with the "party of order." Many Russian Social Democrats condemned the entire program, as Kautsky had done earlier in Germany. It called for cancellation of the debts from 1861, free use of land for the peasants, restitution to the peasants of the otrezki (choice strips of land that had been retained by the landowners in the 1861 reform), and cancellation of excessive rents and exploitative contracts. Lenin felt these changes would "expand the internal market," and "raise peasant livings standards and hasten the development of capitalism in agriculture.

After the 1902 uprisings, Lenin wrote "To the Rural Poor," still maintaining his earlier views on the dynamic in the countryside. But in the article, as Kingston-Mann points out,

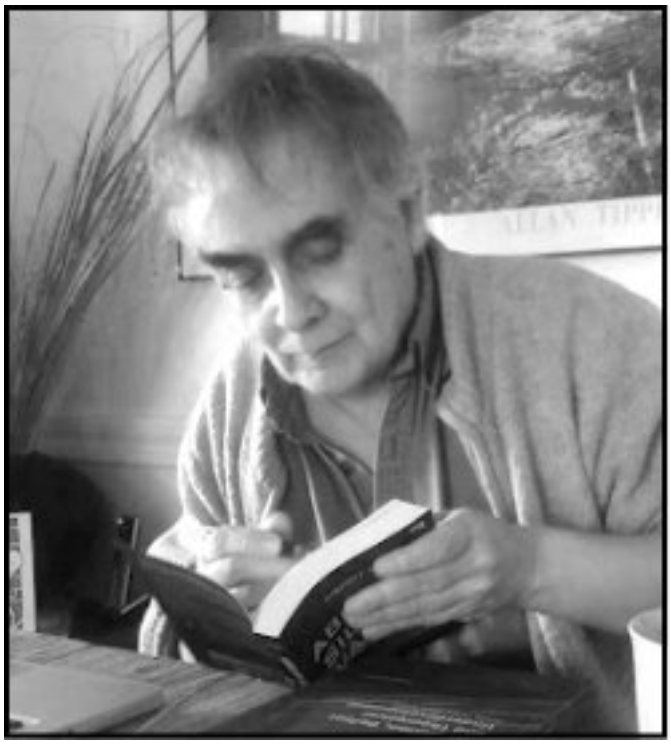
"the repartitional commune, which had provided the institutional framework for so many of the outbreaks, was completely ignored.

All in all,

"Peasant action could only be...'anti-feudal,' and feudal survivals had to be the major concern of the Social Democratic agrarian program."

In 1903, the 2nd Party Congress adopted Lenin's agrarian program, without any mention thus far of a "worker-peasant alliance." Lenin warned against such an alliance. To ally with the proletariat, in his view, the peasants must give up "their own class viewpoint" and adopt "that of the proletariat." ■

Loren Goldner (1947–2024)



Excerpts from the RCO's program on climate and the environment

Nature (from "Our Epoch")

Nature is regarded as a free gift by capital, which has but one interest – self-expansion.

Capital possesses no intrinsic concern either for the worker or nature. Nature and the human being are nothing to capital except objects of exploitation.

Because of its never-satisfed lust for profit, capitalism results in the concentrated degradation of nature. Countless species of plants and animals have been driven to extinction. Many more are endangered. Deforestation, erosion of topsoil, spread of deserts, overfshing of seas and oceans, and anthropogenic air and water pollution have accelerated. In industrial cities that means deadly smogs, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma. Huge numbers have no proper sanitation facilities and no ready access to clean drinking water. All of these horrors sound the warning that a great crisis is upon us: a global ecological crisis, a crisis of the world biosphere, of ocean acidifcation, climate change, and generalised climactic collapse. A great metabolic rift opens, drawing a sharp contradiction between industrial civilisation and the environment.

Instead of cherishing the resources of nature, there is plunder, waste, depletion and irresponsibility. Oil is squandered through the car economy, huge areas of land are given over for growing biofuels, forests are stripped bare to make way for palm oil and cattle ranches, air travel booms while public transport is neglected, and geo-engineering, with all of its destructive and uneven efects, is presented as the solution to climate catastrophe.

Working class power presents the only viable alternative to the destructive reproduction of capital. The struggle of the working class brings with its minimum program not only higher wages and shorter hours; it brings health services, social security systems, pensions, universal primary and secondary education, and measures that protect the environment.

Though it is produced by capitalism, the working class is uniquely opposed to capitalism. The struggle of the working class more than challenges capital. It points beyond: to the total reorganisation of society and with that the ending of humanity's strained, brutalised and crisis-ridden relationship with nature. ■

Nature & Climate (from "The Task Ahead: Our Immediate Program")

Capitalist civilisation has placed humanity upon the brink of ecological catastrophe.

Driven by the brutal logic of capital accumulation, capitalists are driven towards constant expansion of production and consumption. This creates a multitude of crises in the biosphere, atmosphere, and oceans.

Our goal is not only to stop the massive destruction of nature and preserve what we have left, but also to restore and enhance the richness of nature where possible. Ultimately, we want to move towards a planned economy where production is done for utility, taking into account ecological consequences. Until then, we can struggle to subordinate capital to coercive measures for the benefit of nature and the environment.

Climate change and the danger of runaway ecological crises must be dealt with as a matter of extreme urgency. But we should be on guard against pseudo-solutions. Carbon offsets and carbon trading amount to greenwashing capitalism. Blaming population numbers in poor countries easily leads to Malthusian programs and terrible human sufering. Various geo-engineering measures would at best allow capital to continue the general destruction of the planet, and at worst cause devastating ecological crises of their own. Technological "magic bullet" solutions, such as hypothetical carbon capture technologies, cannot be relied upon to deal with the climate crisis. Instead of these non-solutions, communists present these demands:

Protect the Land, Water, and Air! Climate Justice Now!

- The big corporations and imperialist states like the USA, Australia, and the EU must pay for the environmental destruction they have caused in the rest of the world. For reparations to help the peripheralized countries bring about the necessary ecological change.
- Where feasible, re-establish imperilled

ecosystems: forests, natural foodplains, marshes, and rainforests should be rejuvenated. Strive to reintroduce the full array of native fora and fauna.

- Nationalise the land and waterways. Concrete jungles, urban sprawl, using rivers and seas as common sewers, huge farms and intensive meat and dairy production result in substantial damage to the biosphere. This damage must be mitigated through thorough ecological stewardship.
- For a large global program for the reforestation of destroyed forests while at the same time protecting the existing close-to-natural ecosystems. For strict limitations on logging, and the preservation of old growth forests and nature preserves.
- For a global program to protect water resources. For massive investments in drinking water supply and wastewater treatment! For common management of rivers and water-tables.
- For a global program to conserve resources, and to avoid and manage waste. For recycling cooperatives in every community.
- Towns and cities should be full of trees, roof gardens, planted walls, allotments, wild parks, and small-scale cooperative farms, both as a means of deepening food security and as a means of sequestering carbon.
- Destructive fshing practices such as bottom trawling should be banned. Inshore seas must include wide no-catch areas. The aim should be to fully restore marine life and thus create a sustainable fshing industry.
- Full support for the struggles of indigenous peoples and populations threatened by environmental destruction.
- For a restrictive policy concerning chemical products based on the precautionary principle. For a ban on chemicals that are proven or likely to be hazardous to health and/or the environment. Threshold values or danger levels with regard to the use of chemicals must be determined by organs of democratically legitimised social control.

For Ecological War Communism!

- Organise a general industrial plan to move towards a negative carbon society as soon as possible. For a crash energy transition and sweeping ecological reorganisation—we need an ecological war economy! Rapidly transition away from coal, oil, and gas towards wind, tidal, solar, geothermal and other renewables.
- The breakup of the oil-auto-steel complex, the progressive elimination of urban automobile use and the breaking of the automobile domination over the transportation system. The expansion of rail, bus, bicycle, and pedestrian transit.
- For a global emergency plan to restructure the energy and transport system—for a perspective of ending the global consumption of fossil fuels!
- Reduce energy demand: bring home and work closer together, support workers who want fexible working arrangements; introduce free local and urban public transport; discourage the consumption of meat and dairy products; put limits on air travel and car use; ensure that the existing housing stock is radically upgraded and exacting building standards are enforced; impose taxes on big scale polluters.
- Nationalisation under workers' control of all energy corporations, enterprises which monopolise basic goods like water, agribusiness, and all airlines, shipping, and rail enterprises. Abolish business secrecy in the clean technology and energy sectors—pool the knowledge to create efective alternatives.

Socialist Reconstruction (from "Socialist Revolution")

The workers' republic inherits not only sectors of the economy that capitalism has socialised in its own way, but those sectors owned by small and medium capital and the petty bourgeoisie as well as middling classes which possess various skills monopolies. The economy under working-class rule will therefore be contradictory: there is a socialised part and a part which consists of surviving capitalist elements. Given the global organisation of contemporary capitalism, a crash program of simple nationalisation is not a viable path to socialism.

Planning and state control of the fnancial sector and the monopolies is posed by capitalist development itself. The expropriation of the commanding heights of the economy lays the foundation of generalised socialisation. But the full socialisation of production is dependent on and can only proceed in line with the withering away of the skills monopolies of the middle classes and hence the division of labour. In order to facilitate this, we envisage the following measures:

- There will be a radical extension of democratic decision-making in the socialised sector of the economy. All

important decisions relating to production, hiring and fring, etc, will be ratifed by workers' committees. The republic will create a general plan for the entire economy. Technical and administrative workers will be subordinated to democratic decision-making.

- There will be general social ownership of all land and natural resources. Empty houses and o f ces will be transferred to social control, with large o f ces and mansions being handed over to the workers' organisations for their own use.
- The socially unnecessary Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate sectors (FIRE) will be liquidated. Socially unnecessary labour will be eliminated and work will be shared up evenly. For the establishment of worker-consumer collectives in every locality, for the collective organisation of consumption and distribution of basic necessities.
- Regular censuses will be conducted to measure the level and development of the productive forces and to organise the informational basis for economic planning. A communist internet will be created for the general administration and democratic planning of society, formed on the basis of expropriated corporate IT infrastructure.
- As social planning matures, all large frms will be socialised. Workers will be organised to directly carry out socialisation drives. Democratic labour armies will be formed to carry out agricultural, industrial, social, and ecological work.
- The republic will organise shorter working hours and a major expansion of adult education and training to facilitate individuals changing jobs and taking on management and coordination roles.
- In the remaining capitalist sector workers will be guaranteed full rights, and workers organisations will carry out the democratisation of workplaces.
- Unemployment will be abolished. There will be a rational sharing of labour amongst all able-bodied members of society, with the equal right to leisure for all.
- Planning will be based on the widest participation, discussion and decision-making processes, with all plans to be organised by planning commissions and workers' mass organisations.
- Production will be redirected towards socially useful ends and will be reorganised so as to radically reduce the major social and international economic inequalities through technological and skill transfers. Automation will be utilised in order to enhance the quality of life and the collective free time of humanity.
- Measures will be taken to encourage the formation of workers' cooperatives and communal programs, which can then be socialised into a common plan. Small producers will be encouraged to participate in producers cooperatives so as to socialise their labour.
- There will be a progressive decommodifcation of social life through the direct provision of food, housing, clothing, and other necessities in accordance with a common plan. There will be the implementation of a labour-time planning system, as the basis for the abolition of money. As social planning matures, there will be a general transition towards a communist mode of production, where the governing principle is "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need".

The Transition to Communism

The immediate measures of the workers' republic constitute a profound assault on the capitalist mode of production, breaking the most pervasive forms of bourgeois rule and crushing wholly the resistance of the capitalist class. However, it is not in itself the total task of the communist revolution. The new society remains stamped with the marks of the old. In its immature form, communism has only formally dominated and subsumed bourgeois society, it has not yet done so in reality. This unevenness cannot be done away with by simple fat - a period of transition is necessary through which the self-organised proletariat abolishes itself as a class, and constitutes a new, universal community. During this period of transition, the initial measures taken in the early days of the revolution will be taken to their conclusion - the full elimination of private property, the total planning and socialisation of production, the full elimination of money and other forms of economic regulation, and the dissolution of the contradiction between intellectual and manual labour, between town and country, between man and woman, between work and leisure.

The initial, immature form of communist society will necessarily be marked by the combined and uneven processes of social transformation, including the persistence of bourgeois right and law. However, through the maturation of the communist mode of production, this limited form will give way to a fully developed socialised economy, based on

the principles of communist production and distribution.

The end of the dominance of the capitalist mode of production is necessarily limited when it has occurred in only part of the world. The achievement of communism in a single country is impossible, though major developments in social forms are possible prior to the victory of the world revolution, especially on the continental scale. While the immediate extension of proletarian power will have laid immediately the material basis for communism, it may take some time for the new form of social life to come fully to fruition. However, with the victory of the proletariat on the world scale, and with the sweeping of class society fully into the dustbin of history, the preconditions have been established for the emergence of a wholly new society.

With the abolition of class society, the need for the repressive state disappears, and the socialist republic forged in the fames of revolution gives way to a universal republic. This universal republic refects the common management of all of humanity in their common afairs, without the need of a privileged caste or class. As such, the state withers away, a relic of the division of humanity into classes.

It is the tendency of communism to extend the socialised part of the economy so as to fnally replace the market and the law of value with conscious planning and production for human need. With the maturation of social planning and the direct socialisation of labour, a free association of producers will emerge, a cooperative commonwealth, the entire human community working according to a common plan.

Through the ardent political struggle of the communists and the maturation of the communist mode of production, the chauvinisms, superstitions and pretensions of the capitalist epoch will give way to a common, scientifc, universal humanity. The socialisation of reproductive labour, the industrialisation of domestic work, the common raising of children, all will lay the material foundation for the abolition of the family. With the establishment of a universal republic, the nation-state system will disappear, and the narrow nationalisms of the past will give way to fraternity.

The historical task of the proletarian movement is the abolition of class society and the achievement of a communist mode of production. For us then, communism is not an object placed high upon the shelf to which we can only aspire. Nor is it a preference, one of many "possible" ways of organising a society through some voluntary process. It is the real movement to abolish the present state of things. It is the resolution of the historical dialectic between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between capital and labour, between use value and exchange value. The proletarian program is that which is thrown up as necessary in this colossal struggle for emancipation. The development of a mature communism, emerging from the real movement to suppress capitalist society, brings forth the following transformations:

- In place of private ownership and consumption of social production, communism abolishes private property, and fully socialises production and consumption under common management.
- In place of exchange, money and the wage system, communism does away with the market system, and the commodifcation and exploitation of labour, under the principle "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need".
- In place of the anarchy and universal competition of market society, and capitalist monopoly, and the dominance of proft over society, communism brings all of production and consumption under the management of a common plan, where the free development of each part of society is the precondition for the free development of all.
- In place of the modern state, and the apparatus of social repression, communism organises the entire human community in the position of managing their social life, where the governance of people gives way to the management of things, where the rule of classes gives way to the universal republic.
- In place of the privations and degradation of household toil, in place of the family unit, of religious and national chauvinism, in place of the bourgeois regulation of sexuality, there will be a universal republic and a universal human community, where domination gives way to freedom, based on the solidarity of an emancipated humanity and the socialisation of reproductive labour.

These transformations demonstrate the character of communist society. It is this character that serves as a compass-point: a new world to which we set our course. It is the real, concrete unfolding of the struggles of the proletariat today, and as such, constitutes the real movement to resolve the riddle of history. ■

Defend Julius Malema!

The East London Magistrate Court's 1 October ruling against EFF leader Julius Malema is an outrageous attack which must be fought by all of us! While Malema and the EFF are the immediate targets, make no mistake: This is a deadly threat to everyone in South Africa who stands up against imperialism, black oppression, austerity and attacks on the working class. Every one of us, regardless of our other political differences, has a vital and direct interest in mounting a concerted struggle to overturn this ruling.

The court found Malema guilty on five gun-related charges in a case instigated by AfriForum seven years ago after he allegedly fired a rifle into the air during the EFF's fifth birthday celebration. Only fools will believe that this ruling, which carries the possibility of a 15-year sentence, is about "gun safety". The racists of AfriForum have been after Malema's head ever since the EFF's founding, because the party's radical demands like land expropriation without compensation strike a chord with brutally exploited black and coloured farm workers and threaten the parasitic interests of the white baas. What's pushed AfriForum's anti-EFF campaign into overdrive is the backing of the US imperialists, who call the shots. Donald Trump read Ramaphosa and Co the riot act at the Oval Office in May, basically ordering them to lock up Malema as a condition for any easing of the crushing 30% tariffs imposed on South Africa. Any leftists or workers' leaders who remain neutral in this case are, no matter what fancy excuses they give, guilty of wretched capitulation to the US imperialist masters.

Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader Julius Malema under attack.

The ruling against Malema demonstrates once again that you can't fight imperialism with the butchers of Marikana. Ramaphosa and the ANC tops are hellbent on appeasing Trump and his Fifth Column supporters within the country. This will only worsen the economic and social ruin. Already, the jobs bloodbath, de-industrialisation and privatisation are speeding up week by week. Water and other basic services are totally collapsing under the pressure of imperialist austerity and rampant looting. Enough! It's urgently necessary to organise collective action to start defending ourselves against this onslaught. The defence of Malema can be a spark and a rallying point to start fighting back.

The EFF has announced that it will appeal the ruling with a top-notch legal team. It is certainly correct to make use of every legal avenue available. But this struggle cannot be won with a strategy of relying on the courts. EFF militants must just remember the campaign against the fuel levy hike earlier this year, which ended in a costly defeat after the party put all its hopes on judicial challenges to stop the attack. The last thing we need is a repeat of that, which can only feed into the climate of helpless paralysis. Instead, left-wing militants in the EFF and other organisations must fight to push forward the defence of Malema with class-struggle methods. This means tying it to the struggle against imperialist austerity and for the needs of the masses. We must raise the pressure on the leaders of the mass organisations, particularly the trade unions, making a direct appeal to their members' shared interest in joining a united-front struggle against our common enemy. An injury to one is an injury to all!

This approach guided the campaign to defend EFF member and trade-union activist Xolani Khoza, a campaign which ended in a rare victory when the charges were dropped unconditionally two months ago. Just as with AfriForum's campaign against Malema, right-wing reactionaries hoped to silence Xolani's opposition to the pro-imperialist "GNU". But they were forced to back down, following a year-long united-front defence campaign waged by ourselves and EFF Ground Forces along with socialists and black liberation fighters representing dozens of organisations. This is the kind of campaign needed now, on a massive scale. The EFF is calling for protest at Malema's sentencing hearing in East London on 23 January 2026. There's no time to lose. We must start now with mobilising for this protest and organising for a struggle: Hands off Malema! Hands off the EFF! ■

AmaBolsheviki Amnyama, October 8 2025

Letters

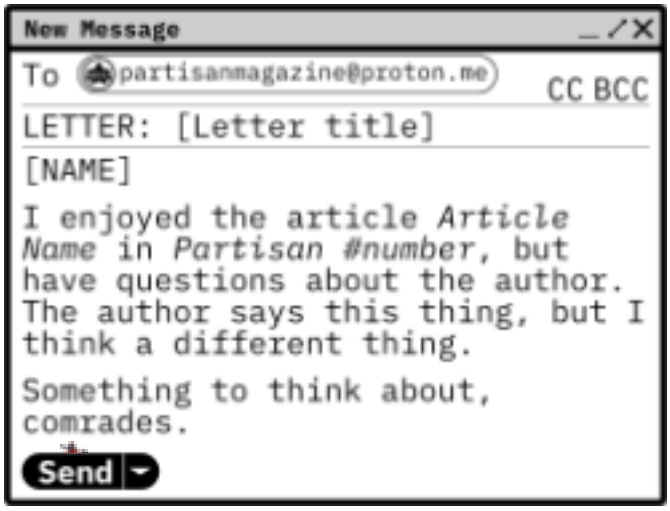
Report on the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance (ANFA)

Pauline Slaughter, Online

The Australian Nuclear Free Alliance (ANFA) held its annual gathering at Flinders Ranges from the 29th of August to the 31st. Formed in 1997, ANFA describes itself as an alliance that "provides a forum for sharing of knowledge, skills and experience", with its annual meeting being an "opportunity to come together and find strength through our shared aims to protect the country and culture from nuclear development". The alliance highlights indigenous voices and has been the centre of successful campaigns, such as preventing the construction of the Jabiluka Uranium mine on Binji land.

Roughly 100 people attended the conference. This included indigenous organisers, activists, and representatives of various NGOs, notably the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF). In Australia, uranium mining is an industry valued in the billions of dollars, with one report stating that "Australia generated $1.19 Billion in export earnings from uranium in FY 2023-2024" with two active mines in South Australia and another in the Northern Territory. Local organisers and activists have been able to prevent or limit the expansion of nuclear power, such as in the Kimba court case. However, with energy prices likely to rise over the coming years, it is uncertain if this strategy is going to continue to be viable. The victory of Labor over the Liberal-Nationals was seen as significant, and billions in nuclear power investments from the Liberals would've almost certainly prompted investment into uranium extraction.

What brings ANFA together is opposition to nuclear, and to a lesser extent concern regarding the climate. It brings together activists of various political orientations. This meant that in between talks by organisers detailing the success and failures of various anti-nuclear campaigns, we had casual conversations with militant anti-vaxxers who warned us of the danger of 5G. This form of unity means that the ANFA did not at any point in their conference present either a program or positive vision. Even if ANFA succeeded at all of its goals, we'd still have ninety-six operating coal mines in Australia.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I enjoyed the article Article Name in Partisan #number, but have questions about the author. The author says this thing, but I think a different thing.
Something to think about, comrades.
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Socialists need their own independent organisations that are capable of engaging in struggle on a principled basis whilst not falling to anti nuclear hysteria. We also need to present our struggle not as just vague opposition to nuclear power, but as an open polemic against the exploitation of capitalism. Our opposition to AUKUS is not just because the submarines being nuclear powered, it is also because of our opposition to Australian and US imperialism. We need to be seen as independent in the climate movement and present a positive program that can oppose capital in its entirety.

Our strategy cannot be to withhold criticism of ANFA or other NGOs in the hope of gaining a few recruits or selling more newsletters. Doing so only denies the working-class elements within those organisations the opportunity to develop class consciousness, nor can we disengage from these institutions whilst polemicising against them. We must be seen as a distinct section of the struggle with our own brazenly socialist institutions that fight both against the destruction of this planet and for hegemony over the climate movement.

It is undeniable that ANFA has achieved genuine successes in the climate movement they are incapable of carrying the struggle through. Socialists must become hegemonic in the climate movement and unify the struggle for our climate with the struggle for socialism. ■

In defence of what?

Mila Volkova, Canberra

Firstly, I would like to thank comrade Fox Luces for their complements on my article (Fox Luces, Letter: "In defence of spontaneity"). I find the lack of serious attention paid to the Arab Spring by the heirs of the International Socialist Organisation quite frustrating. Instead of truly investigating whether their

strategy really turned out to work in practice, they have a habit of continuously appropriating it for the purposes of surface-level propaganda aimed at first-year university students who don't know any better. Indeed, would such recruits come to eventually know better, they will inevitably be thrown out of their respective undemocratic organisations.

Secondly, and in response to the comrade's criticism of my "ideological tunnel-vision", I think comrade Fox is a little confused. I respect their attempt to take the strategy of spontaneity seriously on its own terms. I expect that some of those who read my article may perceive my criticism of this strategy as unfairly dismissive and trapped inside my own theoretical frameworks. However, there is a lack of clarity here, and I would welcome further correspondence from comrade Fox to clear this up.

What is spontaneity, in your mind? I cannot tell. On the one hand, you seem to argue that the vanguard of the working class must always be working to raise consciousness, even outside of the "critical moment" that you refer to. We agree on this much. On the other hand, you remain committed to the notion of an innate revolutionary creativity of the working-class. This is a fuzzier claim, in my mind. I would like to put to you that Socialist Alternative et al are completely in accordance with the strategy of spontaneity. I do not believe they are contradicting it by talking down to the class, as you have acknowledged they have a habit of doing.

If the working class can come to revolutionary consciousness "all on its own", which is what spontaneity really means after all, then what would be the purpose of spreading those ideas beforehand? Indeed, Socialist Alternative would be right that avoiding alienating potential future supporters in the here-and-now is of higher priority. This is epitomised by their attempt to construct the Socialist Party on the broadest possible basis. But if, as you seem to acknowledge comrade, it is only through the pre-preparation efforts of a hypothetical communist party that turns crises and revolts into revolutions, then what is the spontaneous element, exactly?

If all that is meant by spontaneity here is that great leaps in consciousness among the working class become more possible during periods of crisis and revolt, then we are in complete agreement. But this basic definition transforms the term spontaneity into something meaningless. All communists are 'spontaneists', by this definition. We would then need a new term to distinguish the RCO's "strategy of revolutionary patience" from that of Socialist Alternative's movement-of-the-squares obsessed version of the Stalinist "party of a new type". We believe that there is a need to forge a mass communist party immediately.

They leave this to the distant future of "revolutionary circumstances". We see the sect form as compromising the democratic mandate of the working class to determine and control its leaders and politics. They see it as protecting them from opportunism. We want the socialist party to be an openly revolutionary one united around a minimum-maximum program. They think that doing so would limit the size of the project. We think that limiting the size of the project in the short-term is a necessary step for constructing a real vanguard, and that they are structurally empowering the rightist/reformist wing of the party. I see no use in turning spontaneity into a new metric of assessing who is the truest and red-ist commie – doing so would mystify more than it reveals. ■

Their Internationalism and Ours

Roxy Hall, Online (originally published in Cosmonaut Magazine, April 2024)

Considerable ink has already been spilled concerning Comrade Franzblau's report on her participation in the DSA International Committee delegation to Cuba, published in Reform & Revolution on the 17th of February. Most recently, Comrades of the Red Star Caucus have issued a condemnation of Franzblau's activity as disorganizing, anti-democratic, and chauvinistic. It is not within the scope of my letter to comment on the content of either article, or the several other reports and rebuttals issued by several comrades. I do not entirely agree with Comrade Franzblau's views on the character of the Cuban Revolution or the Cuban state. However, I do defend her fundamental right to join in discussions with all perspectives within the Cuban socialist movement.

What I do wish to comment on is the broad outlines of the debate to clarifying an important distinction - for as is often the case in our movement, discussions of this or that detail of the case is serving to obscure the real political difference at play.

It seems to me that the real political distinction here is between two very different conceptions of internationalism. The first is methodologically nationalist, and understands the question of internationalism as being about establishing diplomatic and solidaristic links between distinct national movements for

socialism. This is the perspective represented by the comrades at Red Star. The American and Cuban socialist movements, in this conception, are two distinct movements with the same aspiration of a socialist world - that is, their connection is essentially sentimental. This romantic internationalism is common in today's socialist movement, and (I would argue) has more in common with the romantic pan-nationalism of the radical petit-bourgeois revolutionaries of the nineteenth century than it does with proletarian internationalism.

It should be noted that many "Third Campist" socialists share this conception of internationalism - they simply have a different conception of which sections of the socialist movement, or which potential allied states, etc., best represent their values.

The alternative to this romantic internationalism is the concrete internationalism offered by revolutionary Marxism. With the birth of an international proletariat, internationalism becomes not a lofty ideal but a practical reality. The working class is an international class, bound by the international system of capitalist production. The movement for the emancipation of the working class, that is the socialist workers movement, emerges in uneven ways, but this does not change its ultimate character - it is an international movement. Even though nationality (alongside sex, language, religion, race) divides our class, it is the role of communists to point always to the maximal unity of the workers - international unity.

If we accept that the socialist movement is international, and that all socialists are members of the same movement, then comradely criticism combined with principled defense is not only the right of all socialists, in all countries, but a revolutionary duty. The Cuban socialists, both in power and in the socialist opposition, are not outsiders that must be handled with diplomacy and tact. They are members of our movement. We should engage with them as we would members of our own local!

Lenin and his comrades understood this conception of internationalism. They were unafraid to comment on the affairs of the British, German, French, or Italian communists, even when their movement was relatively underdeveloped in comparison. For them, socialism was an international brotherhood that stood above any national limitations.

The question comrades must ask is whether we are nationally-bound socialist movements with international connections, or an international socialist movement with national sections. That is the distinction between their internationalism, and ours. ■

Partyism't
Max J, Newcastle

The RCO broadly describes its politics as "partyism" - "that section of the communist movement which sees the re-unifcation of communist forces into a single party representative of the movement as its primary task" (per the description in Partisan). This is not new, in fact, the RCO has been "partyist" (maybe in deeds and not words) since the beginning, in 2022 and 2023. "Partyism" describes our politics perfectly. It's just a shame no one really knows what it means outside of our circles.

But Partyism is hardly perfect. While on paper we advocate for a unifcation of the communist movement, Partyists and the RCO haven't been able to work out what we're meant to do if the "communists" we seek to unify don't want to be united. RCO members dream of hypothetical mergers with this sect or that sect, but what many don't understand (or have yet to fgure out) is that many of the existing sects on the Australian left don't want to be in a single, united organisation. This may fy in the face of those who would assume that these sects are all part of the same movement, wanting broadly the same thing.

Controversially, the sectarian left is half correct when it asserts that it wants "something different" to the other sectarians. Many of these groups want wildly different ends to everyone else, with totally diferent means. Partyism rises above the rest of the sectarian left in calling for unity, but more often than not, calls for unity go unanswered, because the "communists" don't want it. We're in a strange situation where very few of the "communists" in the "communist movement" are actually "communist".

I'll give Newcastle as an example. Newcastle might just be the most toxic city in Australia to be in the "organised left". The RCO has had a rocky existence in Newcastle, from getting harassed by Socialist Alliance to getting harassed by the 'Communist Party'. Our calls for unity, in spite of our historic diferences, went unanswered. Our attempts to reach out to "fellow socialists" were more often than not met with hostility. In Newcastle, prospects for unity in the movement are slim to nil, because it's safe to say, "the movement" has been dead here for a decade, if not longer.

As a founding member of the RCO, I

obviously support the RCO's project and its Partyist politics. But more thought needs to be put into the strategy of Partyism, especially in situations like Newcastle, where the "movement" we seek to unite is totally hostile to the concept. I'm glad that the Spartacist League is having discussions with the RCO on unity and seeking to join, but at the same time, I'm confused that the Spartacist League is more willing to have these discussions than the "anti-sectarian" erstwhile comrades of Socialist Alliance, erstwhile comrades in the "legit party" (CPA), or the real r-r-revolutionary socialists in Socialist Alternative.

It paints a bleak image of an organised left that is so slavishly committed to its own history, it can't think of a way forward. ■

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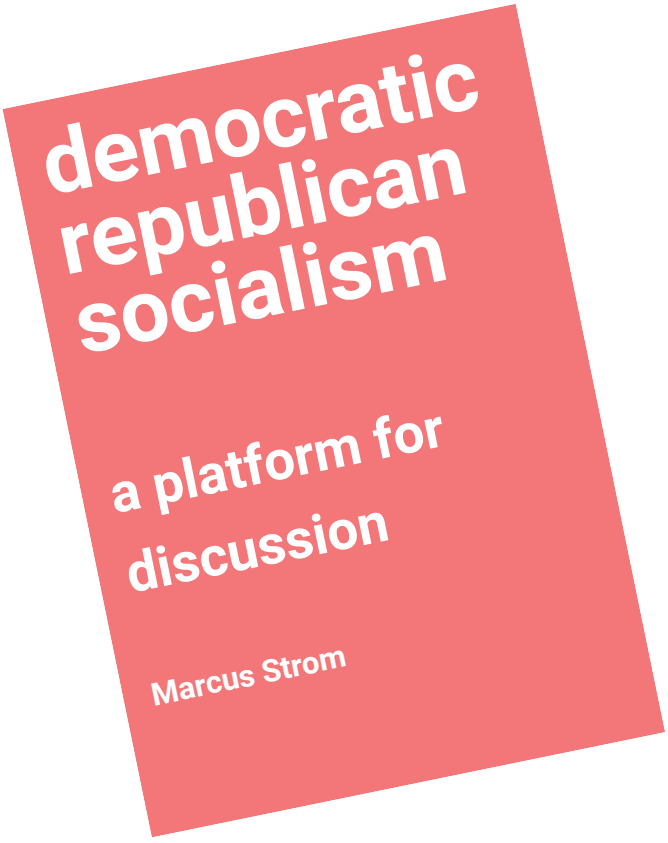
You could also write one directed to the editorial team at Partisan, and if you do, we will submit a reply in the following issue. We aim to build a lively letters section as part of our overall goal to establish Partisan as a platform of open debate and polemic between and amongst the organised Left. Letters should be sent to partisanmagazine@proton.me and contain the subject “Letter: [heading]”. The content of your letter can be sent within the body of the email as opposed to a document attached to the email. ■



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